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THE
CHRIST OF THE AGES

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Garden City *New York*
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THE CHRIST OF THE AGES

CHAPTER I

THE CHRIST OF THE AGES

JESUS CHRIST is the supreme fact in history. This is admitted on every hand. But to admit this much and say no more is simply to create a problem, and to offer nothing of value to the understanding. If Jesus Christ is the supreme fact in history there must be an explanation of His supremacy. We ask, then, what is the conception of Him through which He has come to occupy such a position?

An emotional enthusiasm for Jesus, wholly lacking in intellectual definiteness, may possibly be interesting and satisfying to the experiencing individual; but it can neither be a gospel, nor can it explain Jesus. He must have been intellectually construed. Men must have had a particular conception of Him. We ask, then, what is the opinion men have held about Him by which He has come to His present unique position?

The Advantage of a Physically Absent Jesus

"It is expedient for you that I go away," said Jesus on the last solemn night before that awful Friday when He went to His Cross and tomb. More baffling and incomprehensible words were never spoken to human ears; they do, however, at once both conceal and reveal the secret of Jesus' unique place in history.

To the twelve disciples, Jesus, Messiah, was the summit of their hopes, national, and spiritual. He was at once the fulfillment of their patriot dream of national glory, and their religious hope of salvation. No more bewildering sentence could have been uttered to them than this which He spoke on Holy Thursday evening: "It is expedient for you that I go away." It meant to them the end of all hope and the beginning of all despair. With Jesus gone they were incapable of any hope, and nothing remained for them but surrender to utter dejection.

So they saw it. So they must of necessity have seen it; but far different was the point of view of Jesus. To Him the life He had lived among them in the flesh was one of humiliation and limitation. The flesh is ever limiting; the spirit alone is free. It is so with us. Achievement is limited by the flesh, and fails; but ambition is of the spirit alone, and is magnificent. It was so with Jesus. In His flesh He

knew hunger, weariness, and even death; but in His spirit he knew triumph over death and ascension into Heaven. Flesh, then is limiting, a synonym of the natural; spirit is transcendent, a synonym of the supernatural.

But flesh, though it is limiting, is nevertheless dominating, so dominating that it is almost impossible to hear the voices of the spirit when the voices of the flesh are sounding. So true is this, and so familiar is this truth, that we can hardly find it difficut to understand that the first disciples could not appropriate Jesus inwardly in the power of His spirit while they yet had Him outwardly in the vividness of His flesh. To keep Him, then, as they had had Him was inevitably, therefore, to keep Him limited. They could only possess Him in the glorious power of His spirit if they first should lose Him in the limitation of His flesh. While they had Him outwardly in physical vividness walking with them among the familiar hills of Galilee and along the narrow streets of the historic city of David, it was impossible that they should receive Him inwardly in spiritual power. It was therefore necessary that they should lose Him outwardly in order that they might come truly to possess Him. They must yield Him outwardly in their contact with His limited glory in order that they might gain Him inwardly in the full boundlessness of His power. They must lose Him in their sense appropriation of His humanity, that they might

gain Him in their spirit's contact with His divinity. They must lose Him as natural, that they might come to possess Him as supernatural.

This is what Jesus meant in the verse quoted, but His disciples did not understand Him, and perhaps we scarcely understand Him even to-day. However, in conformity with this great principle, that He here announces, on the next day, awful Friday, Good Friday as we call it now, He withdrew Himself from them. Three days later He returned to them, but not fully, and only for a time. The message of that short forty-day period was the word He spoke to Mary Magdalene: "Hold Me not," for the day of My flesh revelation is past. It was at Pentecost that He fully returned to them, or better, for the first time truly came to them. It was at Pentecost that He was revealed to them in His transcendent spiritual glory, when the Holy Ghost descended upon them with illuminating and transforming power.

Christ Abides Unchanged

And now it is nearly two millenniums that He has been thus manifest in the world. And during these two millenniums the whole outward fashion of life has changed. In large part He is the responsible cause of these changes, but into this fascinating field we cannot enter now. What we

want is simply to see the fact of vast change everywhere, and over against it all to see Him abiding unchanged, unchangeable.

When He began to come to men in inward power the governments of the world were autocratic, science was deductive, books were written by hand and for the few, travel if not on foot was by beast or in a chariot, the ocean was untraveled, and two-thirds of the world was still unknown. To-day governments are democratic, science is chiefly inductive, books are printed on power presses at slight cost and are read by all, travel is by steam and electricity, the whole ocean both on the surface above and beneath is charted and sailed, and the world is explored from pole to pole. Everything changes. Time is a great destroyer. The very hills crumble beneath the weight of years. But He abides. In the East, in the West, from pole to pole and around the world, in India, in China, in Europe, in America, in the wilds of Africa, and in the lonely islands of the sea, Jesus abides unchanged, His glory undimmed, and His sway not only undiminished but increasing. The ruin of the centuries is great, but it reaches not to Him. All thrones and authorities known to His day have fallen, but He abides, the one value that is imperishable, the Christ of the ages, the supreme possession of men.

The Secret of His Influence

What is the secret of this abiding supremacy of Jesus? We answer as He answered, but in a word scarce welcome to the spirit of our times. The secret of Jesus' abiding supremacy is His supernaturalness. Man is a limited being, and, when he can forget his pride of self-sufficiency long enough to realize his needs, he will freely admit that his supreme thirst and greatest longing is for a touch of the transcendent, the supernatural, to save him from futility.

In the Arabian Nights we have this picture: A herald crying before the king as he rides in regal splendor through the streets of an Eastern city: "Hail to the king who lives and dies. All hail to the King who lives and dies not." It is an old tale. It comes out of the long ago. What does it mean? Certainly it is the cry of humanity against death. Nor have we modern men outgrown it. Death hovers over life like a pall of ruin. Shallow lives may try to live and love in the narrow present and forget their fears; but it is impossible. Soon, O! how soon! death will come, perhaps with creeping ruin, perhaps with sudden cataclysm, but it will come, and then in a moment all that has made life worth while will be torn from us. How death buffets and limits our lives! We indeed talk disdainfully of other worldliness, but let us make no mistake, a

philosophy that does not solve death can interest none but shallow men.

But death is not the whole of man's limitation and failure. It is rather but the final manifestation of a failure that is apparent everywhere. There are two great truths about man: one that he is made in the image of God, the other that in him the image fails. Man fails everywhere.

What more pathetic story is there in history than that of man's fruitless quest for truth? And the quest still fails. Our modern science is discovering new problems faster than it is solving old ones. The greatest scientific minds have no illusion at this point. They have no hope whatever that the inductive method will ever solve many of the problems that are being uncovered. The devotion with which evolution is held by many to-day is a witness not to the strength of the scientific evidence supporting it, so much as it is a witness to the despairing realization that is settling down upon speculative minds that without it there is no prospect of discovering any naturalistic explanation of the origin of the universe. By his intellect alone man has not and cannot find the truth. Problems are everywhere about us. The mind that thinks deeply enough to become aware of them will find, in every moment of existence, and at every corner of life, mysteries as incomprehensible as the Virgin Birth of Jesus, or His glorious Resurrection. The intellect alone is not capable of discovering final truth.

The intellect, through scientific investigations, can vastly simplify the mystery of the universe, but it cannot solve it. When it has done its best such questions as time and space, beginnings, and the back-lying mystery of being, will remain unsolved. Science is the approach to truth by the observation and classification of sense experiences, and by generalizations from these. It has its great but limited sphere. Its certainties rest upon its use of observed facts, and upon faith in the reliability of sense revelations; but it knows nothing of ultimate truth.

Beyond the sphere of science is the whole mystery of causation and of ultimate being. It is the sphere of philosophy. Philosophy undertakes to explore these mysteries by a criticism of the various conceptions of reality in the light of intuitive ideas, and by the laws of thought itself. The certainty of philosophy rests entirely upon faith in the intuitions of the mind.

Beyond the sphere of philosophy, but discovered in experience, and, in part, by philosophy, are the ultimate sublimities of God, eternity, personality, freedom, duty, righteousness and destiny. In this vast immensity of the soul both science and philosophy are helpless, and the heart can only feel its way. It is the sphere of religion. We know here by faith, and by faith alone. It is an imperfect light at best, and in it man stands trembling and afraid,

waiting for a revelation from above. Let us put it down: Man cannot of himself find the truth.

But look again at man. He not only fails in his effort to discover the truth, he fails equally when he seeks to give expression to the great emotions and ideals of his soul. They speak of a poet's sorrow—the disappointment he feels who, sensing some vast emotion, struggles to express it, and yet, in spite of all his struggle, fails. The experience is not peculiar to the poet; it is the common sorrow of all those who seek to know and to express the inner world. It may be a poet with his parchment, or a painter with his canvas, or a musician with his score, or it may be some humbler life that simply thirsts to fulfill all righteousness, and to realize all love. It matters not which,—man's dreams ever fail. No painter ever painted all he saw; no musician ever sang the harmonies he heard; no life, save one, ever fulfilled the glory of its vision. Life is ever coming short, is ever disappointing.

We do not mean to lift the wail of pessimism. We believe in the good. We believe in the final fulfillment of every prophecy, the final satisfaction of every longing. But this is our faith, not our observation. The facts of life do not bring this to us; rather the soul within us holds it in spite of the facts. Man's soul feels within itself a mighty urge of transcendence. To-day we miss the truth. We darkly stumble on, seeking to realize the infinities

we feel. We fail and, while we stumbling fail, we fall. Men call it death, but it cannot be the end. We shall yet arrive. Beyond the failing natural there must be the unfailing supernatural. We shall find it. We must stand complete at last.

And so it is, again we say, that men who really live are always seeking for some touch of the supernatural to save them from futility. "Modern men" may take offense at the supernatural, and deny it; but no matter, the heart of man instinctively cries for it. In spite of ourselves, when the hour of affliction comes, and limitation and helplessness shut us in, we turn to the supernatural as a tired child turns to the bosom of its mother. All religion, whether it is lowest superstition or noblest faith, is but a man's reach for the supernatural. In the noble religions, where the divine is seen as ethical, there is always prayer, with its cry for help and deliverance perpetually renewed. In the gross religions of pagan superstition the fetishes and totems all stand for this same desire of man to make some contact with forces above or below him that will strengthen him against danger and death. Those who live in the vanity of sense, and the blindness of intellectual pride, and the shallowness of self-sufficiency, may for a time be unconscious of their utter need; but their need remains; and sooner or later it will force its way to recognition. Let us make no mistake, men must in the long run find the supernatural or give way to despair.

Why the Current Hostility to the Supernatural

In view of these facts, which cannot be denied, it is with amazement we note "modern man's" attitude of resentment and denial toward the supernatural. Take, for example, this attitude as it concerns the Christian affirmations about Jesus. They tell us that the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the deeds of power that lie between must all be repudiated; that modern mind finds them stumbling-blocks to faith; that they are simply incredible. But, we ask, what lies behind this assertion?

The answer forthcoming will doubtless be, that modern science has made the whole idea of the supernatural untenable. But this answer will fail for two reasons. In the first place, true science deals only with facts, it never talks about possibilities. In the second place, all science and all possibilities of discovering truth rest down upon the recognition of human freedom, and freedom, or personality, in man transcends the little order of naturalism and is as supernatural as the omnipotence of God. A world of mechanical determinism can never be a world of truth. Naturalism with its denial of the supernatural and of all personality is fatal not only to all religion, but to all truth, even including science itself.

But, again, what is behind the "modern man's"

hostility to the supernatural? We have thought carefully upon this question. We have come to some conclusions. We do not offer them dogmatically, but set them forth for consideration. We believe a complex of forces have worked together to bring about the current hostility to the supernatural. Among these we can analyze four that seem to be most important.

The first is a deep seated mental peculiarity of man that runs through the centuries, namely, his love of self-sufficiency and related pride. Some years before the war Euchen asserted, that there was in the twentieth century a spirit of self-confidence that is inimical to Christianity. He was right. This spirit has been in our times; it has been to some degree in all times. It is ever a temptation of the human heart. But in the twentieth century it has become to a considerable degree a dominating motive. It controls not only our conduct, but our thinking. "The will to power" is a sentence not yet forgotten. It expresses a spirit that has no kinship with the idea of transcendent Deity and His almighty supernatural.

A second characteristic of the times that counts against acceptance of the supernatural is our objectivity. We are interested in social adjustments rather than heart righteousness. We are interested in temporal betterment, and forgetful of eternal well-being. We are preoccupied with the setting of life, and forgetful of its soul. In a word, we tend

seriously toward a shallowness of both thought and feeling. The demand for the supernatural is one that rises out of the depths of the soul. Not living largely in these depths, we do not feel so powerfully the demand for the supernatural, and so easily dismiss it.

A third factor in the situation is a by-product of the magnificent achievements of the physical sciences. They have vastly simplified the mystery of the universe. They have discovered and defined the wonderful order of nature. This splendid success is a constant temptation to speculative thinkers to carry over into the realm of the spirit methods and ideas that are totally without meaning in that higher sphere. These thinkers claim for their conclusions the authority of science, whereas they are pure imagination, totally without authority, either intellectual, moral or spiritual. Nevertheless, these speculations, that shut up all life within a vast universal order of law, and exclude, with the supernatural, all personality and free action both in God and man, have gained wide currency.

The fourth factor is the influence of the hypothesis of Darwin upon current thought. Now, doubtless, evolution can be so construed as to be entirely consistent with theistic and teleological principles; but the Darwinian form of this theory, which is furnishing the framework, the skeleton, of ideas for so large a part of present day speculative

thought, is definitely anti-theistic, and of course excludes the supernatural.

These forces in their complex interaction upon the thinking of our times have produced the modern hostility to the supernatural. It is simply an age current sustained neither by science nor by any consensus of learned opinions. It is, in our times, as in every other age when it has been developed, a manifestation of intellectual pride and of a certain shallowness of both life and thought.

Why a Non-supernatural Jesus Will not Do

But returning, notwithstanding the current tendency in speculation to repudiate the supernatural, it is, nevertheless, precisely this characteristic of supernaturalness that gives to Jesus His abiding preëminence. Other characteristics in Him contribute elements of value, but, above all else, that which has enabled Him to endure amid the change and wreckage of the centuries the supreme figure in history, the supreme devotion of men, is His transcendence, His supernaturalness. A little time ago one of the leading divines of America came out with a strange apologetic, in view of this current hostility to the supernatural. He said in substance: It does not seriously matter whether the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Jesus are true or not; for even if we lose them both, we will still have His beautiful life, and that is enough. Such

an apologetic fails utterly: for, in the first place, the beautiful life is a part of the total record of supernaturals, and cannot be separated from them; and, in the second place, the cry of the human heart is not for a beautiful life to be its exemplar, but for a divine Redeemer to be its supernatural Savior.

But take the beautiful life of Jesus. Take His sympathy as manifested in His appreciation of the widow's mite. Will we not be bound to admit that Abraham Lincoln's sympathy which knew neither great nor small, friend nor foe, approached sufficiently near to this to be as effective for our emulation? Or, again, take His courage as illustrated in the cleansing of the temple. And does this incomparably surpass Elijah's courage on Carmel? Or take the devotion that He voiced in that noble sentence: "My meat is to do the will of My Father and to finish His work," this is sublime; but will not Livingstone's devotion to the work of God in Africa approach to it, in singleness of purpose, sufficiently to be as effective for emulation? Or take the noble idea that God is Father. No greater conception has ever been put in words than this; but just how is it greater than the spirit of the Shepherd Psalm, or the vision of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah?

Doubtless in all these characters Jesus goes beyond those who approach toward His perfection; but the beauty of those other lives is so far above our human average that they are as useful for

emulation as His own. And is it not a fact that any really good life lived among us, making its vivid impressions upon us, is more useful for emulation than any life lived in the remote past, no matter how perfect it may have been? This is not denying the supreme beauty of Jesus' life, but it is denying that His great value for us either is or can be in this fact. Jesus is certainly for every Christian the perfect ideal of life. But a perfect ideal of life is not man's pressing need. It is not for an ideal that we are perishing. It is for a motive toward the ideal. An example less exalted than that of Jesus could go far toward saving the world if it would inspire in men a motive unto its realization.

No, Jesus does not save us by His example; and His beautiful life, if it were only a beautiful life, would have been in vain. Men and women do not need an example but a Savior, and Jesus saves us not so much by His human likeness to us as by His divine transcendence of us. It is because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily that He is our all-sufficient Savior.

This judgment we have expressed will be sustained by all who have most nearly approached the beauty of its character. With one voice they will proclaim that every spiritual fruitage in their lives is the consequence of His indwelling Spirit. That not through their imitation of Him as natural and human have they attained; but rather through their supernatural relationship to Him as supernatural

and divine. The supreme worth of Jesus is His supernaturalness. His supernaturalness is His abiding power to meet the need of limited, failing, dying men.

The New Testament Portrait of Jesus

It is our wish in this first chapter simply to feel this mighty need of men, and this sufficiency of the supernatural Jesus. Later we will need to define our ideas more closely, and to examine them more critically; but for the present we want simply to feel the power of the portrait of Jesus Christ that faith has held.

We begin, then, with the expectation of Him. In paganism there were dim, confused longings for a deliverer. These seem to be sufficiently explained by the universal failure and longing of the human heart. But in Israel there was an increasing, and increasingly definite Messianic hope that is evidently supernatural. And Jesus came as the fulfillment of all this longing, both the natural and the supernatural. He did not break in upon the world suddenly, and unannounced, He dawned upon it as the day brightens in the east, with many a prophetic gleam before His coming. The age-long expectation of Jesus is the true beginning of His glory. He is the flower of the centuries.

And then, second, we see Him supernatural in His birth. At His appearance heaven drew

strangely near to earth. The Holy Ghost overshadowed His virgin mother. The very presence of God was manifested in naked glory, neither mediated by human paternity, nor hidden behind the ordinariness of the familiar order of nature. He came as one of us, and yet not as one of us. He came to be like us, and yet also to be ever more.

Next, we stand amazed before the supernaturalness of His character. Not only is He good, He is sinlessly good. There is nothing more supernatural than this moral uniqueness of Jesus. He leads the ages in His comprehension of sin. He showed men sin as a thing of thought and desire and not of outward deed alone; and yet He, whose analysis of sin was so penetrating, had no sense of it in Himself. He said of Himself: "I do always the will of My Father." He affirmed that His character was true enough to illustrate the divine, saying: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Such expressions upon the lips of a sinful man would have been blasphemous. The truth is, that the very beauty of Jesus' life, about which modern men talk so much, can only be preserved against the background of its supernaturalness.

Again, we wonder with the men of His day at the power of His mighty works. He touches bread, and it is multiplied at His touch; water, and it becomes wine. He speaks to the waves, and they are calmed at His word; to the dead, and they live again. Conscious of this power that is in Him, He

yields His own life to die, affirming: "I have power to lay it down and power to take it up again." On Golgotha He does lay it down. In Joseph's rock-bound sepulcher He does take it up again. The earth quakes, the rocks are rent, and Jesus comes forth from the Sepulcher with the shout, "All hail!"

Then, we face the question that He proposed to the men of His day: "What think ye of Christ, whose son is He?" We hear the mighty answer of Thomas: "My Lord and my God." Peter confesses Him both Lord and Christ, and as the One seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, a Prince and a Savior. John sees Him the Eternal Word, God with God, the Creator of the worlds made flesh for our redemption. Paul in theological language confesses that "in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." He is truly man; but more, He is also truly God. He is God made manifest in the flesh. He is the eternal Son emptied of His infinite glories, veiled in flesh, humbling Himself unto death for our redemption.

Proceeding, we pause to value Him in His Saviorhood, and here, too, we see Him constantly supernatural. His death has power to redeem: because, in His dying, God has taken up into His own life all the mystery of pain, all that penalty holy judgment wills upon the enormity of sin. On Calvary God bears it all with us and for us: therefore there is propitiation and release. And as it is the supernaturalness of His death that gives Him His

power to redeem, so it is the supernaturalness of His life that gives Him His power to renew. It is by the creative might of the omnipotent God that He unites us to Himself, and transforms us into His image. Doubtless there are ethical and psychological forces involved, but Pentecost is in every age more than these. There is in it the immediate power of the Omnipotent.

Last of all, we see His name as it increases through the centuries. We see Him ever more fully King. He is indeed King of kings and Lord of lords. In Him the age-long dream of world-wide empire will yet be fulfilled: for He will come again, finish judgment, destroy death, and establish in might the glory of the everlasting purpose of God.

This is faith's portrait of Jesus. This is the supernatural Messiah of the New Testament. This is the Savior of man's age-long need and of man's age-long desire. This is the Christ of the ages, who cannot be destroyed, who cannot be surpassed. And now consider. If man's age-long cry for deliverance is ever to be answered, it cannot be better answered than in Him. He satisfies our consciences; for if He is good, He yet is holy. He satisfies our hearts; for if He is holy, He yet is good. Nor is belief in Him quite such a blind venture of faith as it has often seemed. His life was not lived in a corner of the world, but at the center of events. The Mediterranean Sea was the world of Jesus' day, and He lived on the Mediterranean. He lived in the midst

of the Roman world of travel, of culture, of philosophy, and of literature.

And in the providence of God it happens that the witnesses, by whom we know of Him, have the highest possible attestation of their sincerity. When the shadow of death is thrown across a life it makes for deep seriousness and for large honesty. The witnesses by whom we have the record of Jesus did their work with the shadow of death upon them most of the time, and numbers of them did at last suffer martyrdom for their faith. There is no possible attestation of the honesty of a witness higher than this. If we cannot take the word of Peter, James, and John and the five hundred brethren and Paul, who saw Him in His risen glory—these men who gladly gave their lives, and dared a thousand deaths for the privilege of witnessing concerning Him, then there is no historical witness that we can take for any fact whatsoever.

The Supernatural or Despair

Now reflect: There is nothing difficult about the witness to Christ save only that it is a record of the supernatural. But this supernatural is precisely what gives to Him supreme value. It is the supernatural that men so greatly need. It is the supernatural that they increasingly desire, whenever they live great enough to know their needs. Unless, then, "modern men" intend to face life with the

dogmatic assertion that its problems have no solution, and its sorrows no cure, there is nothing they can allege against the reliability of the Church's witness to its almighty Jesus.

After all, the question of the credibility of the supernatural is moral rather than scientific. The fundamental law of the universe is the character of God, not the order of the spheres. Thus, for example, the moral sublimity of the Gospel record of the Virgin Birth of Jesus, in contrast with the utter coarseness of pagan myths ascribing supernatural birth to their heroes, is in itself a sufficient reason why sensitive souls and earnest minds will keep the two forever apart. We need a new and deeper attitude toward the supernatural, if we are to think effectively and toward a satisfying conclusion. Man must have the supernatural. His soul demands it; he has always had it; he will always have it. When men lose faith in the great moral supernatural of Jesus some degraded non-moral supernatural will take its place. Where faith declines superstition has always and will always increase.

It is time to ring down the curtain upon the dark, cheerless, rationalism of much current thinking. Science has its great but limited sphere, beyond it is philosophy, and beyond philosophy is faith. And he who is wise enough to follow truth with all his powers, rather than with reason alone, will know how to find room for the supernatural

both in history and in life, and how to separate the true supernatural from the false by the use of the ordinary canons of history united to the extraordinary canons of the soul.

But why linger in the close atmosphere of modern unbelief? Christ abides, towering, sublime, supernatural, our Savior, our Master, our Lord. We worship Him in the beautiful recollections of His power as men saw it among the hills and by the Lake of Galilee. We worship Him still greater in His own immediate contact with our lives, as with majestic sway He turns and overturns, judges, saves, and transforms through all the Christian centuries. We worship Him once again, not yet, but it will be, when at last the purpose of God is completed: for some day all truth will be finnished, all love perfected, and every dream come true. At last, the unity of God's holy order will be as supreme among men as now it is in nature, and not one deed or thought or emotion even of him who is least will depart at all from His perfect purpose. In that great day, and over that vast empire of the soul there will be one Name,—Jesus, the Name that is above every name. Can it fail? No more than the stars can fail. It is complete in Him. And yet, though He is sufficient, He waits for us that we may build His purpose with Him. He holds back archangels that we may tell the story. He holds back His own omnipotence that we may move it by our prayers. What he will do for men, where

we fail, is largely beyond our knowledge. It is a part of the secret of His providence, a part of the mystery of His dealings with us in death.

But here is the vision: Christ standing there against the background of the centuries, supernatural, transcendent, the one supreme miracle. Christ the answer for every need, the solution for every problem. Christ the way, the truth, the life, the road by which men come to God. The one sublimity unchanged, unchangeable, the power behind the centuries, the goal toward which they move, the abiding hope of men.

CHAPTER II

THE INCARNATION

WE move on, now, to a closer definition of our thought. This Christ of the ages is not only a supernatural being, He is God in flesh. It is the faith of the Christian Church that in the person of Jesus the very everlasting Son of God took human nature and flesh; that God became incarnate. In this belief the Church is consciously describing an act of supreme divine self-sacrifice. Human thought, neither in time nor eternity, can ever conceive of anything more measurelessly sublime. The everlasting personal Son of God, who shares all the majesties and infinities of the Godhead, limits Himself to so much of self-expression as can come through a human mind and nature. The infinite is veiled in the finite. The Creator wills for Himself a creaturehood, soul and body, and realizes and expresses His infinite life only as He can do so through the creaturehood He has taken upon Himself. This and nothing less than this is the faith of the Christian Church.

This is the faith of St. John who writes: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made

by Him and without Him was not any thing made that was made,—And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The Word here, as personality, is living in eternal fellowship with God as personal. The Word here, as fundamental impersonal nature, is, Himself, God, sharing fully the divine nature and powers. And the Word was made flesh; God became man.[1]

This, too is the faith of St. Paul, who sees one to whom belongs the essential form (morphe, μορφή) of God, emptying himself, and taking upon Himself the form (morphe, μορφή) of our humanity. God nature takes created human nature and accomplishes self-expression through it.[2]

This is the faith that is confessed in the Nicene Creed:

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary and was made man." [3]

[1] John 1:1–2 and 14
[2] Phil. 2:5.
[3] *See note,* "The Two Natures," *end of the chapter.*

Facing this stupendous affirmation of faith, human reason first staggers, and then denies. Human reason cannot grasp Infinity veiled in the finite; Creator joined to the creaturehood He has formed. Thinking carelessly reason is apt to conclude that it has uncovered some impossibility here, and, then in the name of Reality, to summon humanity to surrender this, its dearest possession.

Pure Reason Facing the Incarnation

But reason is too hurried in such a conclusion: for every effort reason makes to relate the finite values known in experience to that back-lying infinite, which is necessary to their explanation, is equally unavailing. We have an intuitive sense of the infinities of time and space. We cannot think them. We cannot think without them. We do not find them in sense experience. We find them in our soul. We put them into our world of sense experience. The astronomer's soul creates for his mind the infinite spaces in which he swings the worlds. It is the same with all our infinities. We cannot think of a rim of space. We cannot think of an absolute beginning in time. And yet we cannot relate our finite time to eternity, or our finite universe to measureless space. So here again is the same staggering of reason we experienced when we faced the Incarnation. The trouble, evidently, is not that the Incarnation involves a contradiction, but rather

that man's reason is not sufficient to solve the total mystery of being. The infinite is an intuition of man's higher or religious nature. It is beyond his present possibilities to grasp it and define it as he does the lower phenomenal experiences of consciousness. The infinite must be allowed to remain, like conscience and the sense of immortality, a prophetic fore-gleaming of man's larger life yet to be. In this world he must be content to accept it as a fact in experience, and leave it without precise definition.

Indeed this vagueness in man's sense of the infinite conforms precisely to the conception of man's present state as one of probation. God and His infinities are kept intellectually unknowable. We glimpse them by the power of our higher moral faculties; we see a necessity for them as a ground for finite experience; but we leave them, and must leave them largely undefined, save as we may receive some revelation of them, which is as transcendent to our natural reason as the infinities themselves. But as we have said this situation is just what must be if we, as finite personalities, are to face the infinite and yet not be coerced by it. If we could grasp and define the infinite, it would compel us. If we only glimpse it uncertainly, as a part of our moral intuitions, we can admit it or deny it, and so maintain our moral freedom before it.

Moral Reason Facing the Incarnation

But, to return, that which staggers and baffles pure reason is seen to be not only a possibility, but a probability when man faces it in the light also of his higher powers. Pure reason may stagger before, and deny the Incarnation; but moral reason will face it with a sense not only of understanding but also of positive urgency and desire.

Man's moral intuition is a very profound experience. It is much more than a blank sense of social obligation. It is the sense of an everlasting righteousness; the sense of a righteousness that is both universally standard, and universally obligatory. The moral intuition of conscience, as we sense it, is an obligation that applies not only to men, but equally to God. Abraham's "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" might have been asked by any moral individual, who was religiously sensitive. Some one has said, I will not call that good in God which I call false in men; and every earnest moral and religious thinker must feel the same. Our moral intuition is such that we unavoidably recognize its truths as of universal application.

But this truth (and truth it is, so far as finite intellect can ever be sure of the truth) has a most far-reaching significance. If the moral ought of which we are intuitively aware applies equally to God and man, then God and man live under one

body of moral law. Or, to put it differently, God and men are one moral order, one community, one kingdom. Doubtless we have here the voice of the soul bearing witness to the truth of Revelation, that man is made in the image of God. He is made so fully in the divine image that the moral order under which he lives, when fully grasped, is seen to be nothing less than the everlasting righteousness that is eternal in God. But we have not yet seen the ultimate consequence of this truth. If God and man are one kingdom, living under one moral law, then God cannot be true to His own moral glory and be indifferent to man's problem and failure, to his sin, his sorrow, his death.

In the recent world war there were two notable royal personalities, William of Germany and Albert of Belgium. One of these men sat aloof from the danger and the sacrifice of the struggle, the other shared its utmost cost.

King Albert was with his army continuously. He shared with them every sacrifice and hardship. He dared with them the furious assaults made along the banks of the Yser in the effort to capture the last narrow strip of Belgian soil, and the Channel ports. He was with them without ostentation, or formality, more plainly dressed than officers of his staff, and not more noticed than they; and yet he was loved, loved supremely for his great heroism and his comradeship by every subject of his kingdom.

As we contemplate these two attitudes, we cannot but feel that Albert's was the more noble, the more ethically true. Albert and the people of Belgium were one kingdom. The people of Belgium were in supreme stress. Albert as one who belonged to them, under one body of law, a body of law, too, of which his personality was the peculiar symbol and expression,—Albert could not under these circumstances sit apart in security indifferent to the stress and sacrifice which was all about him. And if Albert could not, neither can God. The fact that God is measurelessly superior to us is nothing to the point. He made us in His own image. He placed us under the moral order which is everlasting in His own character: therefore, because He and we are one kingdom, He cannot sit apart in security and be indifferent to our stress and sacrifice and loss. He must come near us. He must share all our stress with us. He must become a part of our temptation, our confusion, our pain, our fear, our bereavement, our death.

Pure reason may indeed be staggered and overwhelmed by the thought of God Incarnate; but moral reason cannot face the moral mystery of life without feeling that God could not be true to Himself if He should stand away from this mysterious sacrifice. And, after all, what authority has pure reason? It is only a fragment of man's total intellectual life. Man has reason, conscience, sensibility and will: and truth belongs to man, not to any

part of him. Those who would seek for truth by the light of reason alone violate their reason itself: for they both ignore its demonstrable limitations, and also those other powerful lights that shine upon the mystery of being. That reason standing alone shrinks back baffled from the Incarnation is nothing against this stupendous truth, any more than it is an evidence of man's non-adaptation for locomotion that he cannot travel upon one leg. We were not made to travel upon one leg. If we choose to use but one it is our mistake. So with truth, we were not built to pursue it by reason alone, but by reason in conjunction with all the faculties of our personal moral manhood. When we seek truth thus, as we were meant to seek it, we will feel toward the Incarnation not only a sense of its possibility, but also of its urgency,—the Incarnation ought to be true. The moral intuitions of the human soul can only be fulfilled in a God who recognizes the total obligation that is upon Him to share all the strivings of those creatures whom He made in His own image, and whom He placed within the moral empire of His own eternal holiness. The Incarnation ought to be true. It baffles and overwhelms us only when we view it with less than the soul's total light.

We have here a background against which we are able to contemplate the New Testament record of the life of Jesus, and holding it firmly in mind we want to address our attention to that portrait.

Christ Is Unique

Undeniably Jesus is a fact. And, undeniably, too, as a fact, He is unique. If we classify Him as a prophet, He is incomparable as a prophet. If we classify Him as a priest, there never was such a priest as He. If we classify Him as a king, then as king He is The King. In whatever category we place Him, He stands unique and incomparable in that category. Outside of Jesus every other character whom the world has produced is rivaled. Napoleon was a great captain, but so was Alexander. Shakespeare was a literary genius, but so was Dante. If Michael Angelo was a great painter, so was Raphael, so was Da Vinci. If Charlemagne was a great statesman so was Cæsar. Outside of Jesus Christ there is no unapproachable greatness. Every other genius among men has others who rival him for the place of preëminence, and it is impossible to have any consensus of opinion as to who is first. But Jesus transcends all classification and defies all comparison.

Try to classify, or to compare Jesus.

He was a lawgiver; but you cannot stand Moses beside Him: for Moses' ethical ideals were incomplete, they had to be finished, while Jesus' ethical ideals have been seen to be final through two thousand years of experience. He was a prophet; but you cannot compare Him with Isaiah or Buddha or Mohammed: for, in the first place, His truth was

final, while theirs was both partial and corrupted with untruth; and, in the second place, his life was ethically sublime, while theirs were at best only somewhat superior. He was a statesman, He laid the foundations of an empire; but His empire also is incomparable. He replaced the principle of lordly power with the principle of moral love; His empire transcends all racial boundaries, and endures unchanged amid the flux and decay of time. He was an idealist; but no other idealist is worthy to be stood beside Him. Socrates sacrificed nobly for ideals, but there are things in his life story that one would wish to forget. The same is true of the philosopher emperor, Aurelius. But, even if some figure should be found in the record of whose deeds history records no blemish, nevertheless Jesus would still remain incomparable: for He alone among the great idealists of the centuries was never heard to express any sense of sin and failure before His soul's own searching ethical ideal.

Yes, Jesus is unique, and His very uniqueness ought to give pause to all naturalistic interpretations of Him. There is, of course, a certain individuality that is true of every specimen in any classification; but the uniqueness of Jesus is not the small peculiarity of mere individuality. His is the uniqueness of a life that is built upon a distinctly bigger plan.

The New Testament portrait of Jesus may be summarized under eight different ideas, every one

of which is itself a distinct sublimity. We cannot take time for more than one clear lingering look at each of them: for we must move quickly that we may feel the power of the portrait as a whole.

Anticipated

First of all, then, Jesus was anticipated. The expectation of generations and of centuries had waited for the revelation of God's supreme prophet-king, the Messiah, the Savior.

Every devout Jew of Jesus' time, says Edersheim, prayed daily for the coming of Messiah. The tenth of the nineteen benedictions in their daily prayers runs:

" 'Proclaim by Thy loud trumpet our deliverance, and raise up a banner to gather our dispersed, and gather us together from the four ends of the earth. Blessed be thou, O Lord! who gatherest the outcasts of thy people Israel.' " [1]

The Pseudographia, which dates from about the time of Jesus, some earlier, some contemporary, and some later, is full of this same expectation.

Philo, the great Hebrew philosopher of Alexandria, who was contemporary with Jesus, ex-

[1] Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. 1, page 78. The author notes that while this prayer is not one of the oldest, yet it certainly dates from before the destruction of Jerusalem and so expresses Hebrew Messianic hope in Jesus' day.

presses with equal positiveness this great Jewish hope. Edersheim cites from Philo as follows:

"However low the condition of Israel might be, or however scattered the people to the ends of the earth, the banished would, on a given sign, be set free in one day. Then, gathering as by one impulse, the dispersed would return from Hellas, from the lands of the barbarians, from the isles, and from the continents, led by a Divine, superhuman apparition, invisible to others, and visible only to themselves. On their arrival in Palestine the waste places and the wilderness would be inhabited, and the barren land transformed into fruitfulness." [1]

Josephus testifies to the same expectation saying:

"That which did especially inspire them (the Jews) to undertake this war was an ambiguous oracle found likewise in their Sacred Writings, how that some one of their own country, pertaining to that time, should attain the empire of the habitable earth. The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of their wise men were deceived thereby in their judgment." After the testimony, he adds his opinion: "Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor while he was yet in Judæa." [2]

[1] De Execrat. ed. Frcf. pages 936, 937. Quoted by Edersheim, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, page 82.

[2] Bowman, Historical Evidences of the New Testament, page 34.

Seutonius, a pagan writer of the first part of the second century, bears a similar testimony saying:

"A firm persuasion had long prevailed through all the East, that it was fated at that time, to devolve on some one who should come forth from Judæa. This prediction referred to the Roman emperor (Vespasian) as the event proved; but the Jews, applying it to themselves, engaged in rebellion." [1]

Edersheim concludes his own discussion of the Messianic expectation in Jesus' day by saying:

"Whatever shades of difference we may note in the expression of these views, all anticipate the deliverance of Israel, their restoration, and future preëminent glory, and they all connect these events with the coming of the Messiah." [2]

Undeniably this tremendous expectation took its rise in the Hebrew prophetic writings. Nor do we need to insist upon the Messianic intention of every passage that Christian faith has so interpreted. We can even admit a double reference in some prophecies. But, when every concession possible has been made to the rationalistic point of view, three facts will remain: There is a prophetic announcement of Messiah running through the Old Testament. There was a Jewish expectation of His

[1] Bowman, *op. cit.*, page 34.
[2] Edersheim, *op. cit.*, Volume 1, page 82.

coming. And Jesus did find the main outline of His character and ministry in these portraits.

His Virgin Birth

Second, the record is that he was born of a virgin, having no earthly father. We are not claiming that this record is true; but we are claiming that it is a part of the total and primitive account of Him, and that it is historically unexplained either by Hebrew or pagan ideas. The single prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 is not sufficiently emphatic to have produced the idea. Jewish thought had no ascetic aversion to sex relations. And the much talked of pagan parallels are not parallels at all. Justin Martyr pointed out, eighteen hundred years ago, the contrast between the Virgin Birth of Jesus and the pagan stories of sex relations between the gods, who had taken some physical form, and women. The story of a white elephant with six tusks entering the side of Buddha's mother, which is the biographer's description of Buddha's so called virgin birth, can hardly be classified as a serious historical record of virgin conception. No, neither Jewish thought nor pagan thought explains this remarkable item in the Gospels. The Virgin Birth simply stands there as one more marvelous item in the record of a life that is everywhere marvelous.

It is often asserted that the story of the Virgin

Birth is a late addition to the tradition of Jesus, and that St. Paul knew nothing of it; but neither one of these assertions seems to have any other basis than the rationalistic set of the minds making them. With the date of St. Luke being steadily pushed back toward the middle of the first century and with the united authority of the best manuscripts supporting the authenticity of his text in the first chapters, the assertion of a late origin for the Virgin Birth story is immediately seen to be foundationless. As to the ignorance of St. Paul: it is not a legitimate conclusion from his asserted silence; nor is his silence as complete as it is often asserted. St. Paul twice speaks about the birth of Jesus, and each time he uses a peculiar verb to describe the event.[1] The uniform verb in the New Testament to describe birth is "gennao" (γεννάω); it occurs constantly. But St. Paul does not use this verb in speaking of the birth of Jesus; he uses instead the verb, "ginomai" (γίνομαι) which means, to come to be. The verb is not used for birth in the New Testament save in these two instances where it is used by St. Paul to describe the Birth of Jesus. One cannot escape the feeling that St. Paul was so fully informed as to the tradition of the Virgin Birth that, in his very choice of verbs, he discloses his consciousness of this peculiarity in Jesus' origin, even when it was not his intention to discuss its detail.

[1] Compare Romans 1:3 and Galatians 4:4.

His Ethical Finality

Then, third, the New Testament record presents Jesus as the final word both ethically and religiously. He claimed the right to fulfill the law. He claimed to have unique and perfect knowledge of the Father, and to be His adequate representative and expression. And in both of these claims, our experience through twenty centuries, confirms Him true. Jesus is the final ethical and religious word. Not only is this the New Testament record of Him, but it is also demonstrably His place in history. We have left the thought and institutions of the first century behind us. Its government, its ideals, its social institutions are all forgotten. The ethical and religious teachings of Jesus Christ are nevertheless still with us, the absolute standard of all thought and life that is effectively progressive. We depart from Him only to discover futility and chaos. Jesus' ethical and religious consciousness, and His statement of the final meaning and goal of life, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, is the Mount Everest of all literature. His own generation well said of Him, "Never man spake as this man"; and the increasing ages confirm their estimate. Even those of us, who, from rationalistic bias, are unwilling to admit His uniqueness, as a whole, are compelled to admit it at least in this detail. There are certain great moral and religious ideas that are now in the world. They

were not in the world before Jesus came. The Gospels and the whole of tradition attribute them to Jesus. Jesus must have originated them. He must, then, so far at least, be admitted unique.

His Sinlessness

Fourth, the New Testament records present Him as sinless. It is not only that there is no record of any departure upon his part from the absolute ideal of righteousness; nor yet that there is no record of a shadowing sense of sin and failure thrown aslant the inner consciousness of His soul. It is rather that the New Testament presents Him as in word and deed speaking and doing things that would have been impossible to Him except against the background of conscious and absolute sinlessness. A consciousness shadowed by sin could not without impiety have presumed to speak the forgiveness of sin; yet Jesus did again and again speak such forgiveness. A consciousness shadowed by sin could not have assumed to speak with finality about moral things; yet Jesus did assume to fulfill, or to fill up, the moral ideal; and not only so, but He did fulfill it. But, most of all, a consciousness shadowed by the faintest gray of sin could not possibly feel that in Him men might see God; yet Jesus did feel that He knew God with an utterly unique fullness, and that His life as well as His teaching showed Him forth.

His Miracles

Fifth, the New Testament record presents Jesus as wielding supernatural power. Whatever may be a man's philosophical attitude toward miracles, the miracles of Jesus can neither be filtered out of the New Testament record, nor can they be reduced to such manifestations of the power of mind to influence the nervous system as are now generally admitted a phenomenon of nature. Jesus' friends and intimates believed Him to possess supernatural powers. Jesus' enemies believed the same, and explained it as of demoniacal origin. Jesus Himself admitted these powers, and repeatedly appealed to them as certifying His person and ministry.

The question of the miraculous is to-day one of great difficulty. You can hardly prove a miracle. The prejudiced mind will always find another explanation. We will not, however, attempt to prove them. We will simply seek to show that they cannot be eliminated from the New Testament records; and further to show, from their character, that they cannot be explained save by admitting an absolute divine transcendence made manifest in Jesus.

Perhaps the most convincing statement we can make is simply to give a classified list of the miracles of Jesus.

There are seven miracles relating to Him before He came, as follows:

1. The Old Testament prophecy of His coming involving 2000 years and at least thirteen prophets.
2. The annunciation of the forerunner.
3. The annunciation to Mary.
4. The revelation to Elizabeth of the presence of the Mother of Messiah.
5. His virgin conception.
6. The whole historic preparation for Him expressed as "the fullness of time."
7. The angelic vision to the shepherds.

There were twenty three miracles wrought in connection with Him during his early manifestation in addition to those wrought by Him. The list is as follows:

1. The messianic star.
2. The warning to Joseph.
3. The warning to the Wise Men.
4. Second warning to Joseph.
5. Third warning to Joseph.
6. The revelation to Anna.
7. The revelation to Simeon.
8. The descent of the Spirit at His baptism.
9. The voice of God heard at His baptism.
10. The coming of angels to Him after His temptation.
11. The Transfiguration.
12. God speaks at the Transfiguration.
13. God speaks again after Jesus' reply to the Greeks.

14. An angel strengthens Him in Gethsemane.
15. The darkness on Calvary.
16. The earthquake at His death.
17. The rending of the temple veil at His death.
18. The manifestation of the dead at His death.
19. His Resurrection.
20. A second earthquake at His Resurrection.
21. Angels at His sepulcher.
22. His Ascension.
23. Angels at His Ascension.

There is a record of His having performed fifty-seven miracles. We present them classified as follows:

1. Large groups of miracles recorded without detail, nine.
2. Casting out demons, seven.
3. Raising the dead, three.
4. The blind healed, six.
5. Withered and palsied healed, three.
6. Fevers cured, three.
7. The deaf healed, one.
8. Lepers cleansed, eleven.
9. Replacing the ear cut off by Peter, one.
10. A stooped woman straightened, one.
11. Dropsy cured, one.
12. An issue of blood stanched, one.
13. Coin in mouth of a fish, one.
14. A miraculous catch of fish, two.
15. Walking on the water, one.
16. Stilling the tempest, one.

17. Multiplication of loaves and fishes, two.
18. Changing water into wine, one.
19. Withering a fig tree, one.
20. Awing the soldiers, one.

Besides these mighty deeds, variously called signs, wonders, powers, works, Jesus repeatedly manifested supernatural knowledge. We can list the following instances:

Confuting doctors as a boy, His knowledge of Nathaniel, His knowledge of the secret of the Samaritan woman, His knowledge of His own death, His prophecy of the doom of Jerusalem, His prophecy of His Resurrection, His prophecy of His return, His prophecy of Peter's denial, His prophecy of Peter's martyrdom.

Anyone surveying the list of supernatural events and miraculous works connected with the life of Jesus will be compelled to admit both that the miracle is a part of the New Testament Gospel, and that it cannot be explained away. We can shut our minds and hearts to the whole record, but we cannot reconstruct it into the size of life as we know it.

There is one further circumstance, that should be noticed in connection with the New Testament record of the miracles of Jesus, namely, the moral motive that inspired each of them. This circumstance amounts to nothing less than a striking contrast between the supernatural as recorded of Jesus in Biblical as compared with non-Biblical

writings. In the Gospels every supernatural work arises either in naked moral eagerness, or else in a depth of human sympathy that on fuller examination reveals such moral eagerness. The pseudo-gospels, on the contrary, picture Jesus as performing many fanciful works, and some that will not by any means bear the light of the New Testament's white moral flame. As illustrations of this contrast in moral motive we quote two apocryphal miracle stories.

"One Sabbath Day, when He was five years of age, He was playing by a stream, and He gathered the running water into pools and cleared them of mud by a word of command. Then He made clay and molded twelve sparrows. His playmates went and told Joseph how He was profaning the Sabbath, and Joseph came and remonstrated with Him; whereupon the Child clapped His hands and shouted to the sparrows 'Away!' and off they flew twittering. The son of Annas the Scribe was standing by, and he took a branch and broke down the pools. 'Villain!' cried Jesus, 'impious and foolish! wherein did the pools and the water harm thee? Behold, now thou also shalt be withered like a tree, and never bear leaves nor root nor fruit.' And immediately the child was all withered.

"Again, as He was passing through a village, He was jostled by a boy. This angered Him,

and He said: 'Thou shalt not go thy way'; and the boy fell down and died." [1]

His Self-consciousness

Sixth, the New Testament presents the most astonishing account of the self-consciousness of Jesus. His claims for Himself are as extraordinary as the record of His life. Jesus did not think of Himself as one of the prophets of Israel, or even as the greatest of the prophets. He claimed for Himself in many relations the very prerogatives of God. He claimed the power to make full ethical and religious truth, and then beyond all this the power to forgive human sin. He claimed that He was the Master of man, and that to do service in His name was the supreme motive. He saw Himself so majestic that His life yielded up by the will of God, could accomplish redemption for all mankind. He announced that He would be raised from the dead, and enthroned, and that before His glorified presence all men would stand at last for judgment. And this self-consciousness of Jesus can no more be gotten out of the Gospel story than can His supernatural works; they are a part of the record; they are a part of that mighty portrait, the Evangel of salvation, by which unlettered Galileans were able to change the whole face of history.

[1] D. Smith, The Historic Jesus, page 36, quoting Evangelium Thomæ.

His Resurrection

Then, seventh, the wonder of the New Testament record of His life is crowned in the incomparable events with which the record closes: His Resurrection and Ascension. The evidence for these is, as Bishop Gore says, so convincing that an immovable prejudice against the supernatural is necessary to keep anyone from believing. Without the Resurrection there is no possibility of our understanding the joyous and self-sacrificing devotion of the apostles, and of the whole of the first generation of Christian witnesses. If it should be offered in explanation that the apostles imagined His risen appearances because they found the incomparable impression His life had made upon them totally discordant with the idea of His death, we reply: This explanation admits the whole wonder of His life. If His life is pictured big enough to accomplish a compelling imagination of His Resurrection among the first generation of Christians, then the supernatural which is denied at the Resurrection is admitted before the Resurrection; so that, from the standpoint of rationalism, nothing is gained. No, as Professor Loofs has said, in his review of German Jesus criticism: A century of German Jesus research has brought forth nothing. Jesus remains transcendent, unclassifiable; either we must accept the record or stand silent before it.

His Influence

There is one more item in the record of the life of Jesus, it is found in the acts of the apostles. Not in the New Testament book of this name, but in the lengthening volume that is being written all down the centuries. The record of the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus as preserved in the New Testament accounts has been supremely fruitful. It has been said that Jesus divides the ages of history; and it is true. It is not a mere formality of chronology that all the years preceding Him are called, before Christ, and that all the years since He came are called, after Christ. Jesus does really separate ancient history from that which is essentially modern. It was not the passing of the years, but the impact of His Gospel as preached by the apostles that changed the whole ethical foundation of society. Jesus changed nearly every institution of ancient life, its private relations, its social institutions, its theory of government, even its very ideals. He made, in fact, a new world. The world of paganism was one world. The world of Christ is another. Paganism was multiform in its expressions, but it was one in spirit. Its spirit was the spirit of lordly power. It produced many beautiful things; but its ethical basis was always an assertion of power, a tyranny of might. The Gospel of Jesus displaced this ancient principle of tyranny and made the ethical basis of life, the

obligation of holy love. It is doubtless true that men do not fulfill the Christian principle. There is doubtless still much of the practice of pagan lordliness in human relationships. But here is the important thing: The Gospel of Jesus has displaced the principle of pagan lordliness from the ideals of the civilized world. The ethical ideals of Plato will be admitted the highest expression of pagan thought; but great as Plato was he was still a pagan. He did not get away from its superiorities and lordlinesses.

Says Schmidt, in his "Social Results of Early Christianity," Plato "has a beautiful aspiration toward God in which he recognizes his infinite perfections; but though he attains a certain elevation in his speculations, he falls back into pagan egoism when he touches practical and social questions. We find him affected by this egoism even in the midst of his Utopia and the ideal society." [1]

We might well apply to him the words, which Jesus spoke concerning John the Baptist: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater philosopher than Plato, but the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." Paganism at its summit does not even touch the skirt of Christianity's major ethical sublimity: its unbounded obligation to service arising in the principle of ethical love, which is the very character of God.

[1] Schmidt, Social Results of Early Christianity, page 7.

This then is the personality and the historical figure whom the Christians of the first century, and the Christian Church through twenty centuries has proclaimed to be both God and Savior. We join to-day in that century-old estimate, recognizing that the rationalistic objection to its involvement of the supernatural, manifests an intellectual self-consciousness suggestive of adolescence, rather than of the big earnestness of intellectual maturity.

Life's Enlarging Experience

I speak personally. Across the years there has been dawning in my soul a realization that life and truth, as we know them in our earlier experiences, are but the vestibule of life and truth. We are moving through the grades in God's great school of the universe. When we began, in early childhood, we had only primer truths. Our world of mechanical forces and impersonal laws; our snug universe from which some of us argue to exclude God, while others argue to let Him in, is but little further advanced. We move onward, growing up toward the Truth. Browning sees life forever larger. St. Paul cries triumphantly, "All things are yours," and then eagerly lists death in the catalogue. Truth is out there in the future. I shall arrive. But if, in the certainty of my moral and spiritual intuitions, I can dare to renounce a demon-

strably incomplete rationalism, and put in its place the one Figure in all history Who satisfies and fulfills my total being, mind, heart, conscience,—then indeed I am quickly lifted on along the divinely ordered way.

"So onward we move, and save God above
None guesses how wondrous the journey will prove."

We are moving on to that divinely ordained climax of creation: God and man living together in one vast moral empire. And in this sublime upward moving of humanity, by the will of God, there is of course a downward moving of divinity to meet our rising. O, the age-old dream of one vast all-inclusive empire will yet be fulfilled. Conquerers saw it distorted, from their morally distorted point of view. The prophets of Israel saw it more truly, but not clearly. It was fully revealed in Jesus. It is not yet realized, but it will be. The life, the Eternal Life which was with the Father, has been made manifest unto us. The Infinite has taken upon Himself our finitude that the promise suggested in our consciences and more fully made known by Revelation might be realized at last. Indeed the truth is larger: for already the goal of the ages is an accomplished fact in Jesus: for in His mysterious Theanthropic person God and man are indeed one moral empire.

My brethren, the vision may indeed overwhelm pure reason, but the circumstance is no argument

against it: for pure reason is simply an unbalanced pursuit of truth. The vision satisfies and fulfills moral reason, that is, reason morally, spiritually and personally enriched. It is supported in history. It is the home of the soul. Somehow I find myself believing. No! I do believe. I mean to believe. With every power of my personality I choose Him. I put myself in His keeping. I rest. Confidently, I cry:

"But this I do find, we two are so joined,
He'll not dwell in glory and leave me behind."

NOTE

The Two Natures

The doctrine of the Incarnation is essentially the doctrine of two natures, the divine and the human. The divine nature standing as the total law characteristic of the eternal life of the Son of God. The human nature standing as the total law characteristic of man's created life. In the Incarnation the Son of God chooses to limit His self-grasp and self-expression to so much of His infinite capacity as can come to expression under the law of that human nature He has taken upon Himself.

We need to hold three things clearly:

(1) The fundamental being of God was not modified in the Incarnation. The everlasting life of God is the same, unchanged, unchangeable.

(2) The human nature Christ took was a complete human nature, but it was not a human per-

sonality. The only personality, the only self-consciousness of the man Jesus, was the personality and self-consciousness of the eternal Son of God.

(3) The humiliation Christ experienced in the Incarnation was in the sphere of His consciousness, not in the sphere of His essential being. He chose to limit His self-grasp and self-expression to so much of His divine infinites as could be grasped and expressed through the medium of the human nature He had taken upon Himself.

The mystery involved in the Incarnation is not the question of how Christ could have two natures and one self-consciousness; it is rather the question of how the Eternal Son could reduce His self-grasp from the plenitude of God to the measure of human nature, and even of human infancy. But this mystery is not an effective objection against the Incarnation: for it is not a whit more difficult than the mystery of created personality. We were not, and did not know or will. We are, and do both know and will. If I think of myself as real enough to know and will I think of myself as too real ever not to have had these capacities. The problem of my own increasing consciousness is as mysterious as the voluntary emptying, in respect of His self-grasp, of the consciousness of the Son of God.

The essential elements in the doctrine of the Incarnation would seem to be four:

1. The two natures or laws of being, the divine and human;

2. The unity of the personality, of the self-consciousness, that of the eternal Son of God;

3. The integrity of both natures,—their abiding without confusion;

4. The everlastingness of the union,—The Son of God become man forever.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN FAITH FROM PENTECOST TO NICÆA

FROM the day of its establishment (the first Pentecost after the Resurrection) forward there has been in the Church one major stream of belief concerning the person of Jesus Christ. Apostolic Christianity differs from Nicene Christianity only in that at Nicæa the recognition of Christ's Deity was given philosophical expression, whereas in apostolic times this recognition was chiefly expressed in terms of moral and redemptive faith. But, for Peter and John as well as for Athanasius, Jesus was God manifest in the flesh.

There is as standing against the background of Israel's monotheism just one possible explanation of this stupendous recognition. It is Jesus' own claims as certified and illuminated by His life and His resurrection from the dead. Peter could never have called Jesus "The Prince of Life," and John could never have called Him, "The Life, the Everlasting Life which was with the Father," if Jesus had not made supreme claims for Himself, and if these claims had not been effectively certified by His life and illuminated by His Resurrection. Of course Jesus' claims could not be suddenly an-

nounced; they had to be let to grow in the minds of His disciples. The conception of His Deity, as of His redemptive death, could only be expressed at first in vague suggestions, and allowed to develop, to come to clearness, as the background of faith in Him enlarged. Negative thought only displays its own obtuseness when it undertakes to deny the supreme place of redemption in Jesus' ministry by saying, the Cross is not expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, nor does it come to any clear emphasis until toward the end of His life, after His public ministry was closed. Jesus could not make men understand His redeemerhood until they had seen His Godhood; and they could not see His Godhood until they had come to feel it in the touch of His life. Jesus' supreme claims must of necessity, at the first, have been but vaguely expressed. And yet, as a fact, there is more about both these truths at the beginning of Jesus' life and ministry than we might reasonably have expected. Omitting, for the present, St. John's account of the Judean ministry, we find Jesus foreshadowing His Cross early in His Galilean ministry, and we find Him at about the same time asserting also the supreme significance of His personality, notwithstanding He fully understood the sense of impiety it had produced in the minds of his auditors.[1] When these two expressions are stood against the background of all that He taught later, only the most prejudiced

[1] Compare St. Mark 2:19–20 and 2:10–11.

minds will fail to find in them a reference to His Deity and to His Cross.

The Self-assertion of Jesus

But without further introductory discussion let us turn immediately to the Synoptic Gospels, and see what collectively they record to have been the self-consciousness of Jesus. Take the total synoptic teaching, avoiding duplications, except where they are due to our Lord's repetition of an idea, and it will be found that there are 259 separate items of teaching recorded. Of these 131 contain some definite expression of Jesus' self-consciousness. This fact is itself sufficiently remarkable: for to talk about one's self is not commonly the mark of an humble servant of God. If, now, you compare Jesus' self-consciousness with that of the prophets of Israel, you will find it still more remarkable: for His self-consciousness presents a contrast rather than a comparison with theirs. The prophetic heart was in the dust before the Infinite. John the Baptist voices the typical prophetic point of view, when, in extreme self-effacement, he calls himself a mere voice crying in the wilderness. But Jesus ever displays a marked self-assertion even in His humility. Take for example that remarkable passage recorded by both St. Matthew and St. Luke: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither

knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." There is nothing reminiscent of the prophets of Israel in these words. These words rise above the humble consciousness of Israel's prophets as the mountains rise above the plains.

But there is a yet more significant comparison. Jesus' self-consciousness not only rises infinitely above the humble prophetic mind, but it is also very much fuller than the self-consciousness of one who will unquestionably be classified as among the world's greatest willers, and also among its most egotistical men. It so happened, that, when I was making this study of the self-consciousness of Jesus, I was also reading a volume of private letters and other personally written documents by the hand of Napoleon Bonaparte. One would, of course, naturally expect to find a freer expression of self-consciousness in such private letters and documents than in public discourses and remarks; and one would, of course, naturally expect to find a fuller self-assertion in the egotistical world conquerer than in the meek and suffering Jesus. But the facts are just the reverse of our expectations. There is more self-emphasis in the public words of Jesus than in private letters and documents of Napoleon. Jesus' self-consciousness is both fuller and more assertive than Napoleon's. This characteristic of Jesus presents great difficulty for those undertaking a naturalistic interpretation of Him. It lifts

Him out of all classification. It separates Him from the prophets of Israel. It separates Him equally from the category of good men: for humility is a necessary trait of nobility. And yet it will not do to say that Jesus was not humble. He claimed the prerogatives of God, but yet He claimed them with a humility that was as striking as was His assertiveness. He was a character at once supremely humble, and supremely assertive. Human experience cannot explain Him; and human imagination could not have produced Him. What author known to men would have been capable of producing this portrait of Him who is at once the Lord of Heaven and servant of men? We cannot construe Him. Who then was He? How did He conceive Himself?

As we have already said, out of 259 separate items of teaching by Jesus, in the Synoptics, 131 contain a definite self-consciousness. We turn to these, and let the Master Himself make His own self-classification.

That we may get a clearer grip upon these several teachings of Jesus concerning Himself we will break them up into several classifications. They fall naturally into fourteen groups: We will give them, and the number of separate items of teaching in each group.

1. Jesus calls Himself, The Son of Man, thirty-eight times.
2. Jesus spoke of God as, My Father, twenty-seven times.

3. Jesus claimed peculiar and exclusive relation to God nine times.
4. Jesus refers to His death as a divine purposing, or as a certainty, sixteen times.
5. Jesus fore-announces His Resurrection from the dead, and speaks of it as divinely purposed six times.
6. Jesus announces His Ascension and glorified return nineteen times.
7. Jesus promises to be supernaturally present with His followers, while physically absent from them, six times.
8. Jesus claims to be the supreme motive of life eight times.
9. Jesus claims to wield all moral and religious authority eight times.
10. Jesus claims that he will be the final judge of the whole world three times.
11. Jesus claims supreme authority over the forces of nature five times.
12. Jesus expresses joy and sorrow according as men believe in or doubt Him eight times.
13. Jesus accepts the title, Son of God, five times.
14. Jesus claims to be the Master of men twice.

We might easily draw a conclusion at this point, but the argument becomes more conclusive if we go on another step. It is widely admitted that the Fourth Gospel teaches a true Incarnation. The late Professor Walker of Yale admitted it of this Gospel, though he sought to deny it both of the Synop-

tic Gospels and of the epistles of St. Paul. It is doubtless the clearness of this gospel's expression of the Incarnation, more than anything else, which has made destructive criticism determined to put it late. Turning, now, to the Fourth Gospel we notice: There are a hundred and seventy-nine separate items of teaching recorded in the Fourth Gospel as from Jesus. Of these one hundred and sixty-three express a clear self-consciousness. But all these various expressions of Jesus' self-consciousness, recorded in St. John, with the exception of two, fall naturally into the same fourteen classifications already developed by our study of the Synoptics. In these two excepted expressions Jesus lays claim to sharing creatorship with God the Father. This is the only respect in which the self-consciousness of Jesus according to the Synoptics is definitely short of that recorded in the Fourth Gospel. The portrait of Jesus in the Synoptics is as transcendent as that in St. John. There is an increase of definiteness in St. John, but no higher conception. If St. John records a true Incarnation, so do St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke: for the major ideas expressed by Jesus concerning Himself are the same in all. Only an invincible prejudice can face these facts and deny this conclusion. We can start, then, with this much as certainly established: That unless the gospels are to be denied all historical reliability, Jesus laid claim to an absolutely unique relation to God that

no man could have cherished without extreme impiety.

The Apostolic Teaching

We pass now from Jesus to the apostles, and we find the same estimate of His person that we saw revealed in His own self-consciousness. In reviewing these expressions we need constantly to remember that the apostles were Jews, and that their monotheistic conviction was as deep seated, as their experience of the utter transcendence of Jesus was positive. To worship no one but God was the cardinal idea of the Old Testament. Its expression was a part of Israel's daily worship. So ingrained had this idea become through Israel's mighty providential experiences that they willingly endured even death rather than compromise it. Shortly after the Ascension of Jesus, in the time of Caligula, they did in fact brave death rather than suffer the statue of the Emperor to be placed in the Temple. Says Professor Faulkner: "Rome recognized the death defying hostility of the Jews to idolatry, and did not finally undertake to compel them." The apostles shared this history, and this attitude, and the development of a Jesus cult would have been absolutely impossible to them save as they identified Jesus with the one true God of Israel, and as this identification was grounded in the most positive and convincing of experiences.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the intellectual difficulty of the situation, we see a tendency to identify Jesus with God even before the Resurrection. St. Peter showed Him reverence approaching worship at the very beginning of the Galilean ministry, after the incident of the miraculous catch of fish. And all the disciples similarly bowed down before Him after the incident of His walking upon the sea. Thomas clearly gave Him worship the second time He showed Himself to the assembled disciples after His Resurrection.

The worship of Jesus is an accepted attitude in the book of Acts. From the beginning we find that they "called upon the name of the Lord" (Jesus), just as they did upon the name of Jehovah. The dying Stephen saw Jesus in glory and prayed to Him, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." With his last breath he addressed to Jesus a prayer that is reminiscent of the prayer he had heard the dying Savior address to Jehovah, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." [1] Similarly Ananias describes Christians as those "that call on Thy name," [2] referring to Jesus.

In the epistles of St. Paul, too, the recognition of the Deity of Jesus is constant. It is the background of his whole self-consciousness, and of his gospel. He is the bond-slave of Jesus; his only glory is Jesus' redeeming love; he feels strong only when

[1] Acts 7:59–60.
[2] *Ibid.* 9:14.

he is so consciously weak that he must depend upon Jesus; Jesus is to be his final judge; from Jesus he expects to receive everlasting life as a gift; indeed, salvation consists entirely in unity with Jesus by faith.

But there are in the Pauline epistles a few great passages in which the consciousness of Jesus' deity, which is implicit everywhere, becomes explicit. Take that great statement in Philippians, "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant." [1] The words, "form (Greek μορφή) of God," describe God in His essential nature. Jesus, says St. Paul, had this divine nature by right. Again take the more philosophical passage in Colossians, where St. Paul relates Jesus to God and to creation. He says of Him: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born before all creation.—By Him were all things created—and He is before all things; and by Him all things consist." [2] In Romans and Titus St. Paul applies the name "God" to Jesus. The punctuation is disputed, but the punctuation which avoids the specific naming of Jesus, God, gives a poor sense in each instance, and in the second instance it is almost impossibly forced. In Romans, St. Paul is speaking of Jesus' Hebrew ancestry, and says: "Of whom according

1 Philippians 2: 6 ff.
2 Colossians 1: 15–16.

to the flesh Christ came, who is over all God, blessed forever." [1] The passage in Titus runs: "Looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God, and Savior, Jesus Christ." [2] These statements are fully conclusive as to St. Paul's complete recognition of the Deity of Jesus; we will call attention, however, to one additional item of evidence before we pass from his writings. The Pauline epistles repeatedly unite Jesus with God the Father in expressions of prayer and praise.[3]

Turning from St. Paul to the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews, we find that the major point of the writer is the tremendous superiority of Jesus as the Son of God over the prophets and angels who were the mediators of the first covenant. That is, the whole epistle turns upon the recognition of Jesus' Deity. Then too there are those passages in which the author develops the eternal priesthood of Jesus. These are certainly a clear expression of his belief. Take one of them: "If the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God!" [4] What does he

[1] Romans 9:5.
[2] Titus 2:13.
[3] Thes. 3:11; 11 Thes. 1:1-2; 2:16-17.
[4] Hebrews 9:13-14.

mean by the expression "through eternal spirit," if he does not mean Deity? Jesus by His eternal Godhood offers Himself a redemptive sacrifice. This is the most evident meaning, and this interpretation makes Jesus' Deity explicit.

St. Peter again, unites Jesus to the Father and the Spirit in a trinity of redeeming grace. We quote his beautiful sentence: "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." [1] St. Peter as a Jew would not thus unite Jesus with the only true God unless he felt that He eternally belonged there.

St. John, also, is perfectly specific both in the prologue of His Gospel, and in the opening verses of his great Catholic Epistle. In one he describes Jesus as the eternal Logos, the Creator of the universe, who from before the beginning was in personal communion with God and who also Himself fully possessed the divine nature. In the other he describes Jesus as the Life, the Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us.[2]

Finally there is the book of Revelation. If this is not Johannine then it adds another to the list of indisputable witnesses from the first century to the Deity of Jesus. Three times the speaker in the opening verses of this book describes Himself as

[1] I Peter 1:2.
[2] Prologue of his Gospel 1:1–2; Epistle 1:10.

the First and the Last. The third time the reference to Jesus is clear beyond any possible doubt. It runs: "And when I saw Him (the glorified Jesus) I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid His right hand on me, saying. Fear not, I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forever more, Amen; and have the keys of death and hell." [1] In the light of this explicit reference to Jesus as the First and the Last one is inclined to regard the other two verses, expressing the same self-consciousness as having a similar reference. They run: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty," [2] and "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last." [3] This third quotation appears to be the opening sentence spoken to St. John by the glorified Jesus, standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks. If the language of these quotations does not incontestably describe Deity, no language can.

And so with unanimous voice the Church of the first century, the Church that had been in immediate contact with Jesus during His earthly life and in His Resurrection glory, proclaims Him everlasting and eternal God. The truth of Jesus' Deity

[1] Revelation 1:17–18.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1:8.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1:11.

did not come into the Church as a gradual development after He had passed off the stage of history. This opinion represents the chosen point of view of a certain modern school of thought, rather than a natural conclusion of unbiased minds on the basis of the New Testament facts. Jesus revealed His Deity to His disciples, and while they may have been slow to give it philosophical expression, they did, nevertheless, give it moral and redemptive recognition from the very beginning.

Patristic Teaching

The accuracy of this latter conclusion can easily be put to the test if we but examine the writings of the Church fathers who immediately succeeded the apostles. The conception of Jesus' person, which they expressed, was very likely to be the one they were taught; and when you consider the deferential attitude of the second century toward the primitive Christian tradition, we may almost say, it was certain to be.

Between the last of the apostles and the time of St. Athanasius, when the doctrine of Christ's person was given precise philosophical definition, stand a succession of great Christian leaders, and one anonymous Christian formulary. We might list them in chronological order as follows:

1. Clement of Rome, who lived in Rome dur-

ing the last decades of the first century. The letter bearing his name, and addressed to the Church at Corinth, is generally admitted to be genuine.

2. IGNATIUS, Bishop of Antioch. He was martyred about the year 110. He was a man of deep spiritual life, and fine intellectual powers. There are several letters from his hand which are generally admitted.

3. PAPIAS, a contemporary of Ignatius, Bishop of Hieropolis. Only small fragments of his writings are preserved.

4. POLYCARP. Bishop of Smyrna. He was a disciple of the Apostle St. John late in his life, and was martyred about the middle of the second century.

5. ARISTIDES, a Christian teacher, who addressed an apology to Hadrian about the year 133.

6. THE APOSTLES' CREED in its earliest form dating back to the last of the first century or the first of the second.

7. JUSTIN MARTYR, a pagan philosopher, who was converted to Christianity. He wrote extensively in its defense. Several of his writings are preserved. He was martyred about the year 165.

8. IRENÆUS, Bishop of Lyons, one of the most distinguished teachers and writers of the early Church. He was born about 115 and died about 190. He was a disciple of Polycarp.

9. TERTULLIAN, born at Carthage between 150 and 160, and died there between 220 and 240. He

was a man of birth and education, a lawyer by training, an incisive intellect, the first of the Latin apologists, and one of the greatest of them.

10. ORIGEN, the brightest intellectual light of the early Church. He was born in Alexandria 185 or 186, and died about 254. He was the head of the great Christian school at Alexandria.

All of these Fathers, with differing intellectual precision, in part, but all of them, nevertheless, worshiped Jesus and trusted Him as their Redeemer and their all-sufficient Savior. In several instances they gave expression to their faith in a creed trinitarian in form, like the Apostles' Creed. We want quickly to glimpse their teaching concerning Jesus. It will increase the clarity of this hasty survey of patristic teaching if we make each quotation a separate paragraph standing under the heading of its author's name and the approximate date when he wrote.

CLEMENT OF ROME—97

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sceptre of the majesty of God, did not come in the pomp of pride or arrogance, although he might have done so, but in a lowly condition, as the Holy Spirit had declared regarding Him." [1]

"He does good to all, but most abundantly to us who have fled for refuge to His compassions

[1] Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, page 11.

through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and majesty for ever and ever. Amen." [1]

"On account of the Love he bore us, Jesus Christ our Lord gave His blood for us by the will of God; His flesh for our flesh, and His soul for our souls." [2]

Clement also quotes Hebrews 1:3–4 to show the exaltation of Jesus, and he says that in Him we possess all things.

"This is the way, beloved, in which we find our Savior, even Jesus Christ, the High Priest of all our offerings, the defender and helper of our infirmity." [3]

Ignatius—107

"For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water.

"Now the virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring, and the death of the Lord; three mysteries of renown, which were wrought in silence by God." [4]

Papias—120

"For I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those who spoke much, but in those who taught

[1] Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, page 11.
[2] *Ibid.*, page 18.
[3] *Ibid.*, page 14.
[4] *Ibid.*, page 57.

the truth; in those who rehearsed the commandments given by the Lord to faith, and proceeding from truth itself. If, then, any one who had attended on the elders came, I asked minutely after their sayings,—what Andrew or Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the Lord's disciples: . . . For I imagined that what was to be got from books was not so profitable to me as what came from the living and abiding voice." [1]

"The same person, moreover, has set down other things as coming to him from unwritten tradition, amongst these some strange parables and instructions of the Savior, and some other things of a more fabulous nature. Amongst these he says that there will be millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth." [2]

Polycarp—120

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, (but) 'Whom God raised from the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave.' 'In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory'; into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that 'By grace ye are saved, not of

[1] Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, page 153.
[2] *Ibid.*, page 154.

works,' but by the will of God through Jesus Christ." [1]

"And may He bestow on you a lot and portion among His saints, and on us with you, and all that under heaven, who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who 'raised Him from the dead.'" [2]

"Be ye safe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be will you all. Amen." [3]

Aristides—133

Aristides' apology addressed to the Emperor Hadrian has disappeared long since. A fragment of it was discovered in an Armenian translation and published by the Mechitarists in 1878.

"It sets forth the Christian idea of God as an infinite and indescribable Being, who made all things and cares for all things, whom we should serve and glorify as the only God."

Its doctrine of Christ we quote:

Christ is "the Son of the most high God, revealed by the Holy Spirit, descended from heaven, born of a Hebrew Virgin. His flesh He received from the Virgin, and he revealed himself in human nature as the Son of God. In his goodness, which brought the glad tidings, he has won the whole world by his life giving preaching. (It was he who according

[1] Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, page 33.
[2] *Ibid.*, page 35.
[3] *Ibid.*, page 36.

to the flesh was born from the race of the Hebrews, of the mother of God, the Virgin Mariam.) He selected twelve apostles and taught the whole world by his mediatorial light giving truth. And he was crucified, being pierced with nails by the Jews; and he rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. He sent the apostles into all the world and instructed all by divine miracles full of wisdom. Their preaching bears blossoms and fruits to this day, and calls the whole world to illumination." [1]

The Apostles' Creed—100

The substance of this creed is supposed by Harnack to have originated in Rome about the middle of the second century. Kattenbusch, who is the author of two large volumes on the history of the Creed, puts it back to about the opening of the second century. Seeberg puts it still earlier, "at the beginning of the second century or the end of the first century." Seeberg concludes this from "the fact that Ignatius and Justin employ various formulas which remind us of the Symbol," and from the further fact that "an Irenæus and Tertullian declare that the rule of faith has been handed down from the time of the apostles." [2] This creed in its earliest known form, that of the third or fourth century, was as follows:

[1] Schaff quoting Armenian Translation of Aristides, Church Hist., Vol. II, page 709.

[2] Seeberg, History of Doctrine, Vol. 1, page 84.

I believe in God the Father Almighty;

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; He was born by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary; He was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of the Father; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead;

And in the Holy Ghost; Holy Church; remission of sins; the resurrection of the body.[1]

Justin Martyr—150–165

"Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judæa, in the times of Tiberius Cæsar; and that we reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third, we will prove." [2]

"Jesus Christ is the only proper Son who has been begotten by God, being His Word and first-begotten, and power; and, becoming man according to His will, He taught us these things for the conversion and restoration of the human race"; [3]

"We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He

[1] Schaff, Church History, Vol. II, page 535.
[2] Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, pages 166–167.
[3] *Ibid.*, page 170.

is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers";[1]

"For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water."[2]

"And His Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word, who also was with Him and was begotten before the works, when at first He created and arranged all things by Him, is called Christ, in reference to His being anointed and God's ordering all things through Him";[3]

"For next to God, we worship and love the Word who is from the unbegotten and ineffable God, since also He became man for our sakes, that, becoming a partaker of our sufferings, He might also bring us healing."[4]

IRENÆUS—170–190

"We believe in one God the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;

And in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God (our Lord);

Who became flesh (of the Virgin) for our salvation;

[1] Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, page 178.
[2] *Ibid.*, page 183.
[3] *Ibid.*, page 190.
[4] *Ibid.*, page 193.

and his suffering (under Pontius Pilate);
and his rising from the dead;
and his bodily assumption into heaven;
and his coming from heaven in the glory of the Father to comprehend all things under one head, . . . and to execute righteous judgment over all.
And in the Holy Ghost.
And that Christ shall come from heaven to raise up all flesh, and to adjudge the impious and unjust to eternal fire, and to give to the just and holy immortality and eternal glory." [1]

TERTULLIAN—200–220

"We believe in one God, the Creator of the World, who produced all out of nothing.
And in the Word, his Son, Jesus Christ;
Who through the Spirit and power of God the Father descended into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and born of her;
Was fixed on the cross (under Pontius Pilate), was dead and buried;
Rose again the third day;
Was taken up into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father;
He will come to judge the quick and the dead.
And in the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Sanctifier, sent by Christ from the Father.

[1] Schaff, Church History, Vol. II, page 536. The bracketed words in these citations by Schaff are later additions.

And that Christ will, after the restoration of the flesh, receive his saints into the enjoyment of eternal life and the promises of heaven, and judge the wicked with eternal fire." [1]

Origen—225–250

"One God, who created and framed everything;
Who in the last days sent our Lord Jesus Christ,
born of the Father before all creation;
born of the Virgin and the Holy Ghost;
made incarnate while remaining God;
suffered in truth, died;
rose from the dead;
was taken up.
The Holy Ghost, united in honor and dignity with the Father and the Son." [2]

We have now passed in hasty review the stream of Christian teaching and faith from Jesus through the apostles and fathers down to Athanasius and the great symbol which bears the name of Nicæa. We have found uninterruptedly one sublime faith in Jesus as both God and Savior. We have seen Jesus claiming this dignity and office for Himself. We have seen the apostles understanding His claims just as we still understand them. We have seen this whole conception of Him passed on from generation to generation through three centuries until at last it emerges at Nicæa in precise philo-

[1] Schaff, Church History, Vol. II, page 536.
[2] *Ibid.*

sophical language. And we have seen that it emerges at Nicæa just as it began in Jesus. Of course there were contrary currents and conflicting eddies; but the main stream of faith was constantly sure and strong. We will need later to examine these negative currents, but we want first to consider what is the intellectual warrant for our continued confidence in this sublime faith.

CHAPTER IV

CERTAINTY OF THE INCARNATION

FOR the naturalist the universe is one whole, a complex of resident forces; and the natural is anything that can be explained by these resident forces; anything that does not involve the interferences of an extraordinary force from without. For the theist this universe and all of its resident forces are being perpetually constituted anew by the Divine volitioning: so that God is as present in the purple splendor of a sunrise as He was in the flash of lightning which was sent from heaven in response to Elijah's prayer. A supernatural event, then, for the theist, does not have in it more of God than a natural event, it is simply God's immediate response to a moral need of the race or of some individual in the race. In prayer we recognize the necessity for this personal immediacy; it is an essential part of the vitality of prayer. It is God's side of the personal reciprocity achieved in prayer between Himself and His creatures. In the program of redemption this immediate response is to an abnormal moral condition of the race rather than to the petition of an individual. But in each

case there is an immediate, personal (and therefore supernatural) response, which is manifest as a striking providential adjustment, or otherwise extraordinary circumstance. And this extraordinariness is a considerable part of its value: for the extraordinary manifests God's presence to our sin-darkened understanding. It is a fact, but it is not important, that for the theist there is no metaphysical distinction between a natural and a supernatural event. The supernatural is, from the standpoint of nature as an organization of secondary forces, extraordinary and peculiar, and this extraordinariness reveals God to man's abnormal understanding. The supernatural is, then, God's personal and extraordinary response to some situation arising in man's freedom. As developed in Scripture these supernatural events always have a moral significance.

It would be a mistake to regard these immediate responses or self-expressions of Deity as lawless. The creation of human personality, whether by evolution or by divine fiat, is a supernatural event; and from that point on there is a supernatural, personal, and moral order within the natural order. Human personalities, free and creative under a law of freedom and moral obligation, cannot, certainly, be confused with the necessitarian idea law means as applied to the physical cosmos. There is the natural order. Above this is the supernatural order, or law, of free moral personalities. Above this,

again, there is the still higher order, or law, of redemption. There is a law of redemption in Christ, and there is a law of victory over death in Christ. These are certainly not a part of the order of nature; they are supernatural; and yet they are as orderly as nature. Above all these is the everlasting order of the holiness of the Triune God. This is the ultimate order, and any miracle which fits into this ultimate holiness is as orderly as gravitation. The fact of the matter is, the order of everlasting holiness made manifest in the miracles of Scripture is so majestic that in comparison with it the order of physical nature is dwarfed into insignificance.

The supernatural as thus defined is a religious moral and philosophical idea from the discussion of which the inductive sciences are of necessity excluded. The inductive sciences are an exploration, through the senses of secondary forces manifest in the universe. They know nothing of the activity of primary forces, and so cannot, with any authority, answer in the negative the question whether the Primary Force has or does in the course of the centuries manifest Himself in a transcendent way. But we may put this down as certain: If the Primary Force is a personality, and if men are personalities, then the supernatural is a fact: because man's own freedom is transcendent to the order of nature. If man, as personal, is transcendent, from the standpoint of nature viewed as a system of

forces, it would be a strange philosophy indeed that would deny an equal majesty to God. But in any event, if the denial is made it must be made on the basis of a chosen point of view in philosophy. The whole discussion is beyond the range of the scientific method.

Scientifically, then, there is nothing against the Christian conception of the supernatural; and, philosophically, the conception of an unchanging divine personal holiness is far more majestic than that of the mechanical unity of nature. But this is our point: There is not and cannot be any scientific objection to the Christian supernatural, whereas, philosophically, against the background of personality, it is so entirely appropriate as to be even a probability.

Having thus cleared the way for some positive thinking, we want, now, to present a seven-fold argument which powerfully supports the faith of the apostles and of the Church fathers in the person of Jesus.

The Open Sepulcher

(1) It begins with the fact of the open sepulcher. That the sepulcher of Jesus was open and empty on Easter morning amounts to an historical certainty. Jerusalem was a very small city in Jesus' day: so that the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, which was located near Calvary, just outside the

city wall and hard by the Damascus gate, was within twenty minutes' walking distance of all the inhabitants. It is an improbability that amounts to an impossibility that the disciples could have proclaimed Jesus risen, and His grave open and empty, to throngs of worshipers at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, if within easy walking distance of where they stood was Jesus' grave, closed and sealed, with His body in it.

But the argument is even more convincing. The Sanhedrin, the ruling body in Israel, had crucified Jesus, and they wanted him dead. They were men of intelligence and ability, and so would have known that the best answer to a dangerous untruth is a clearly patent fact. Their most effective possible answer to the apostolic proclamation of a risen Jesus would have been the sealed sepulcher with the body of Jesus in it. It would have been idle for the apostles to have proclaimed an empty tomb, and a risen living Jesus, when once the Sanhedrin had conducted a public demonstration of the vivid fact of the sealed tomb and the mortifying body of a dead Jesus. Such a demonstration conducted during the presence of the Pentecostal crowd at Jerusalem would have made the spread of Christianity impossible from the very start: for it would have sent into every corner of the Roman world devout Jews who knew of a certainty that Jesus was not risen. It would have made all persecution wholly unnecessary. It would have terminated

Christianity before it had even begun. That the Sanhedrin did not do this, that instead they threatened the apostolic group with severe punishment unless they ceased witnessing to the empty tomb and the risen Jesus, is the best historical demonstration possible that the tomb was indeed empty. The facts were against the Sanhedrin, and so they turned to force. Anyone who has observed carefully the contests of men for their ideas, will immediately recognize in persecution (no matter what its form) the marks of a weak case. Patent truth does not need to be nervous or excited. When the Pope attacked Martin Luther's motives, it proved that he could not reply to Martin Luther's facts. When the American Association passed a resolution that evolution is true, it proved that the scientific argument for evolution was seriously defective in facts. When the liberal wing in Protestantism boasts of its scholarship, it proves that this scholarship cannot produce anything more convincing to talk about. The most telling force in the universe is a fact. No one desiring to prove the fact of a sun shining in the sky would become excited about a blind man saying, It is night. No one would persecute the blind man; everyone would forget him, knowing that all seeing people would recognize the patent fact of the sun. The fact that the Jewish Sanhedrin did persecute the apostolic group amounts to an historical demonstration that the

tomb of Jesus was open and empty just as Peter and the other apostles had said.

From Despair to Confidence

(2) Again, Good Friday was a day of extreme darkness for Jesus' followers. It produced in the apostolic group both discouragement and fear. A few days later their state of mind was changed into one of fearlessness, joy and victory. The imagination of negative criticism is unable to suggest any explanation of this changed state of mind other than the fact of the empty tomb and the risen manifestations of Jesus as related in the Gospels. To say that the impression made by His life was so transcendently great that His followers could not long continue to think of Him as dead, is to concede His transcendence, and to make the naturalistic objection to the Resurrection witness futile. If Jesus is admitted to be transcendent in any respect the naturalistic position is surrendered from end to end, and we might as well accept the whole of the apostolic testimony. To say, Something must have happened, but historical scholarship cannot imagine what it could have been, is a plain non-scientific evasion of the apostolic testimony. The truly scientific mind will never set aside a responsible testimony to a fact that does fully explain a given situation, only to replace it with a vague "something" the

nature of which no one can even so much as begin to imagine. It takes more credulity to believe the critical case against the Resurrection of Jesus than it does faith to believe the apostles.

Sincerity of the Witnesses

(3) And now the details of the apostolic testimony themselves,—are they false? This is too large a question to be answered certainly; but we can answer most positively a part of the question. We are absolutely certain that the witness to a risen Jesus was sincere. This sincerity is certified by the joy and constancy of the apostles' labors. This sincerity is certified by their death-defying devotion. Men may shrink from sacrifice for the truth; but no man will joyously sacrifice, and sacrifice even unto death, for what he knows to be untruth. Nothing but the frank admission of their supreme certainty of the truth of the things to which they gave witness can possibly explain their prolonged and martyr devotion. Negative scholarship often over-states the facts in its possession in its arguments against the apostolic witness, but no scholar has ever died for the privilege of making these over-statements. From the standpoint of evidence the sincerity of the apostles is a very much better fact than the sincerity of modern scholarship. When men joyously dare death, and finally accept death for the privilege of testifying to an experience

it is time to cease criticism and listen reverently.

The Detail of the Testimony

(4) But again if the Apostolic witness is sincere it is probably also true, for it is in such vivid detail as constantly to suggest the direct testimony of an eyewitness. Criticism likes to assert that the accounts are conflicting; that St. Matthew places all the appearances in Galilee, while St. Luke places them all in Jerusalem; that St. Luke has them all occur in the one day, while St. John (or whoever wrote the Fourth Gospel) stretches them out through a series of weeks. One might be amazed at the persistence with which these trivial things are said if one did not know two things: first, that the phenomena of Modernism is an expression more of hostility to the supernatural than it is of careful thinking; and second, that Modernists as a group are traditionalists, accepting the negative assertions of their school far more readily than conservative thinkers accept the declarations of the Christian Church. But let us briefly examine the apostolic witness to the Resurrection as we have it before us in the New Testament.

First, there is the earliest written testimony, that of St. Paul in his first letter to the Church at Corinth. This epistle is dated in the middle fifties, when the great majority of the eyewitnesses of the

risen Jesus are still living. St. Paul gives in it this summary of His appearances: "He was seen of Cephas: then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles." Now turn back to St. Luke's story in his gospel and the Acts. St. Luke relates that Jesus appeared to the two who were traveling to Emmaus.[1] Then we have the fact that He had already appeared unto Simon.[2] Then we have His appearance to the Twelve. The second and third of these Lukian appearances can be identified clearly with St. Paul's first two. St. Luke and St. Paul are thus far in perfect agreement save that St. Luke records an additional appearance. St. Luke's story in the gospel runs on without any indication of time; but in the Acts he has a definite note of time. He says that Jesus "showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days." [3] Criticism seeks to explain away this definite testimony of St. Luke to the lengthened period of Jesus' risen manifestations by saying: St. Luke did not know this when he wrote his gospel, but found it out later and put it into the Acts. But this explanation is forced and entirely improbable. St. Luke was a companion of St. Paul before he wrote his gospel, and therefore

[1] Luke 24: 13–32.
[2] Luke 24: 34.
[3] Acts 1: 3.

must have known as much about the risen appearances of Jesus as St. Paul knew when he wrote his synopsis of them in First Corinthians. But we have no reason to suppose there were five hundred followers of Jesus in Jerusalem three days after the crucifixion. St. Paul's testimony about Jesus' appearance to the five hundred brethren at once argues both for Galilee and for some time after the first Easter day. If St. Paul knew this, then St. Luke knew it also, and the explanation of his compressed story in the Gospel will be simply that he compressed his facts rather than that he did not have them.

But continuing our reconstruction of the apostolic testimony, St. Paul's synopsis most probably requires that we go northward into Galilee to find the setting for the appearance of Jesus to the five hundred brethren at once. Now St. John tells us that precisely this took place; that Jesus appeared first in Jerusalem, as Luke testifies, and then later manifested himself to His disciples in Galilee. St. John tells us that there were two appearances in Jerusalem to the twelve with an almost identical setting. St. Luke could easily compress these two into one, and St. Paul's brief synopsis of Jesus' appearances would almost certainly do the same. This brings us to the Galilean appearance. St. John tells us the details of an exceedingly beautiful manifestation of the risen Jesus to seven of the apostles who had gone fishing on lake Galilee, and

then at the end of this narrative he notes that Jesus said to Peter, "Follow Me." [1] Jesus evidently is instructing Peter, and the rest of the seven to go with Him somewhere. May not this place, whither He would lead them, be the trysting place before appointed where He would meet the Eleven? Is not such a Galilean meeting probable, in view of the numerous announcements of it? And is it not also probable that along with the Eleven there was a considerable company of His Galilean followers just as St. Paul records?

But let us return to St. Paul's synopsis. We read: "After that He was seen of James: then of all the apostles." We have no other witness to Jesus' appearance to His brother St. James, so we pass to the last of St. Paul's enumerations. His appearance to "all the apostles." This expression suggests a different and larger group from the "Twelve" noted by St. Paul just above. Who were included in this group? In the Acts St. Luke gives a list enumerating beside the Eleven "the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and—His brothers." He also says that the number of the disciples in Jerusalem just before Pentecost was one hundred and twenty. It was to some part of this larger group, he tells us, that Jesus showed Himself on the mount of Ascension. This wider circle, noted by St. Luke, fits perfectly St. Paul's expression, "All the apostles." Some part, then, of this larger group,

[1] John 21:19.

the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, would be the company whom He led out from Jerusalem to Bethany, and St. Luke and St. Paul would again be in complete agreement.

Gathering up, now, we find that St. John clearly tells us of both Judæan and Galilean appearances; while St. Paul, to say no more, would seem to require both to fill out his synopsis; and St. Luke fits perfectly into St. Paul's synopsis on the simple supposition that his account is compressed, which is the natural interpretation of it in view of his statements in the Acts. St. Matthew narrates only one appearance, but it is the big official appearance in Galilee which St. Paul describes as His appearance to over five hundred brethren at once. And so all of the irreconcilability which radical Criticism has constructed to discredit the Resurrection witness easily disappears, when, starting with St. Paul's synopsis (written within twenty-five years of the event) we simply suppose that St. Luke has compressed his account, and that St. Matthew has given us only the big official appearance. The fact is, it is easier to harmonize the Resurrection witness than it is to make out Criticism's irreconcilability. If the accounts are irreconcilable we must suppose that St. Luke did not know the common Christian tradition outlined by St. Paul in Corinthians; and that he presents a different tradition in the Acts from what he does in his gospel; and that there were in the primitive Church two inde-

pendent traditions of the Resurrection appearances, one locating them in Galilee and one in Jerusalem; and finally we must suppose that all of these accounts with their wealth of detail are mere tradition largely unreliable. We give it as our judgment, again, that it takes more credulity to doubt with the critics than it does faith to believe with the saints.[1]

It should be noted also that St. Paul omits any reference to the appearances of Jesus to the women. This is sufficiently accounted for by the superior value of the male witness in the estimation of the times.

One final word with respect to the apostolic witness to the Resurrection. Its fullness and precise detail suggests the eyewitness rather than tradition. It is true that stories grow, but they do not grow in exactness. Names, places, times, and exact circumstances are the marks of authentic accounts, and not of loose irresponsible tales. Of the ten resurrection appearances of Jesus the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and tenth are positively rich in detail. Take that beautiful record of Jesus' appearance to the two as they journeyed from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and note the fullness of detail. It is found in St. Luke.

[1] A belief that has no moral urgency behind it, and no particular intellectual probability is properly referred to as credulity in contrast to Christian faith which is everywhere supported by a powerful moral urgency and also by the testimony of reliable witnesses.

The men were Cleopas and a friend. 24:18.

The time of their journey was in the early evening of the first Easter. 24:29.

The distance they traveled and their destination are given as sixty furlongs, and Emmaus. 24:13.

Their conversation by the way concerned the recent sorrowful events at Jerusalem. 24:14.

Jesus drew near and walked with them as they journeyed but they did not recognize Him. 24:15–16.

Jesus asked them concerning their sorrowful conversation, and they remembered the very things they had said in reply. 24:19–24.

Jesus' interpretation of the sorrowful and triumphant events in the light of prophecy, and the spiritual emotion they felt as He spoke are all given. 24:25–28 and 32.

The striking little incident of Jesus making as if to go on, their constraining Him to be their guest, and then their recognizing Him when he said the words of blessing over the evening meal are also given. 24:28–31.

Finally, His mysterious vanishing, and their hasty journey back to the city to thrill in the enthusiasm of the apostolic group gathered there is told. 24:31–34.

This does not sound like a growing irresponsible story, as we have said, it sounds like the testimony of an eyewitness to a real event,—and six out of the ten recorded appearances of Jesus are in just

such fullness of detail. We will give a list of the recorded appearances noticing which are in detail.

1. The appearance to Mary Magdalene is in full detail. It is recorded in John and noted in one of the endings of St. Mark.

2. The appearance to the group of women has some but not much detail. Incidentally, it is a Jerusalem appearance recorded by St. Matthew, St. Matthew alone records it.

3. The appearance to St. Peter is without detail, but is witnessed to by St. Paul and St. Luke. St. Luke may be dependent.

4. The appearance to the two on the way to Emmaus is told by St. Luke in great detail. One of the Markian endings also notes it.

5. The appearance in the upper room on the first Easter evening is in full detail and is noted by St. Luke, St. John and St. Paul.

6. The appearance on the eighth day is in full detail, but is recorded only by St. John. St. Luke and St. Paul, not having been eyewitnesses, would easily compress thus the fifth and sixth appearances.

7. The appearance by the side of Lake Galilee is in full detail, but it, again, is recorded only by St. John.

8. The appearance to the disciples in Galilee, which might be called the official appearance, it being the one spoken of by the angels and arranged for by Jesus, has some detail. It is recorded by St.

Matthew and is probably noted, also, in the list by St. Paul.

9. The appearance to St. James is noted by St. Paul, and is without any detail.

10. The final appearance, that at the time of the Ascension, is in some fullness of detail, and is noted by St. Luke both in the Gospel and the Acts. It is also noted by St. Paul.

This is the witness. Few events of history are so well certified. When it is remembered that the most of this record was made within thirty years of the events being described; that in devotion to it those who were responsible for its narration gladly endured both persecution and martyrdom; and that one main exhibit of their witness, the open empty tomb, stood vivid and incontestable through all those first weeks and months after the event,—when these things are remembered, then indeed must every fair mind agree with the judgment of Bishop Gore, that only an invincible prejudice against the supernatural can keep one from accepting the apostolic witness to the Resurrection of Jesus.

Unity of the Portrait

(5) But, conclusive as this is, it is not by any means the whole of the argument. The evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus stands out against the whole background of the portrait of His life. It is

not any man at all of whom the apostolic testimony is that He rose from the dead; it is a particular man; the particular man Jesus. And this witness of His Resurrection fits perfectly into the transcendence of the total portrait. The century-long expectation toward Him, the mysterious circumstances attending His birth, His ethical finality, His personal sinlessness, His majestic and incomparable self-consciousness, His mastery of the forces of nature,—all these things are a part of the portrait; and every one of them is as clearly transcendent as the Resurrection and Ascension with which the portrait closes. In other words Jesus must be totally accepted or totally rejected. Either He is all that the apostles and the Christian Church through the centuries have proclaimed Him to be, or He is nothing of real human interest whatsoever; and the answer we thought we had found in Him to all the outreachings of our souls must be given up, and there is nothing, and can be nothing, to put in His place. Jesus the beautiful human teacher and life, whom Criticism has created, is too unhistorical to be convincing, and too small to be helpful.

The Fact of Christ and the Soul of Man

(6) But the transcendent Jesus of the Gospels satisfies us, and this very fact that He does satisfy us, that He does so perfectly meet our human needs,

is a part of the total witness to Him. No man can read the New Testament record of Jesus, its miracles, its Cross, its Resurrection, without wishing to have it true. Deeper still, no man can read the New Testament record of Jesus without feeling that it ought to be true. Jesus fulfills the human soul. He is the answer for which the race has longed through all the years of its aspiration, failure, tears and death. The human race longs to arrive at truth, to arrive at true goodness and true self-expression, and to be delivered from the oppressing limitations of life, and from the awful futility of death. The human race has a deep intuitive sense that some time it will arrive, that some time it will be delivered. Generation after generation it has been disappointed. Generation after generation it has striven and hoped and failed and wept and died the same. Is there then to be no answer? Is all this longing, all this moral aspiring to remain forever unfilled? Men who are living at their moral best cannot answer this question with, No. Humanity must arrive. No, not the race, by some process of evolution that sacrifices the individual, as a designer might cast aside the imperfect models made at first, but every morally earnest individual. We must arrive. We will arrive. But the certainty of our arrival is also a certainty that we must become transcendent. The system of nature, as at present revealed, blasts us. We must become transcendent to it. In other words, the

supernatural is necessary to the fulfillment of man's moral and spiritual destiny as this is revealed in the intuitions of his soul.

But, we ask, if the supernatural is to be revealed at some point in the future history of the race, why not accept it as a fact in Jesus where it has been developed with such moral majesty, and with such inner consistency; and where it has been testified to with such proven sincerity, and such convincing detail? We find in Jesus the answer to all our longings; the fulfillment of all our unfulfilled aspirings. We long to have Him true. We feel that He ought to be true. We feel that, if there is any moral constitution of the universe, or any moral truth in life, Jesus Christ must be true. We feel we can afford to believe Him, just as the Church has preached Him and without diminishing one sublimity; for, if life is true, He is true; and if He is not true, then life is a falsehood, and conscience a deception. No, if Jesus is not true, then untruth is more sublime than reality; and the imagination of the human race has produced a nobler fact than is revealed in all the universe of God.

The Impact of Christ on Civilization

(7) And now finally there is one more tremendous fact. It is that the preaching of Jesus, just as the Church has believed Him and preached Him, has changed the face of history. At Jesus' birth

the world was one vast despotism. Children were enslaved to their parents. Women were enslaved to their husbands. Toilers were enslaved to their masters. Subjects were enslaved to their rulers. Oppression was rampant. War and plunder were without shame. Parents exposed their children to death, and maturity similarly exposed helpless age. The spectacle of human life sacrified in blood and agony was the fondest amusement of the populace. The ethical cause of all this oppression and cruelty was the egoism of paganism. The Gospel of Jesus has displaced this pagan egoism and replaced it with the ethics of love. The Gospel of Jesus has not only changed this ethical background of pagan life, but it has changed, too, the whole outward face of life. There is still much of egoism in living; but Christendom in its darkest spots, nevertheless, towers above paganism. And there is this further difference: That the ethical consciousness of Christendom as a whole recognizes that egoism is false, whereas paganism as a whole, and even in its noblest philosopher, Plato, both practiced and approved it. If Christ is not true, and just as the Church has preached Him—for it is this Christ who has been creative—if this Christ is not true, I say, then untruth has been more creative than truth. O blessed illusion of Jesus that has healed so much human woe! If it should be objected, that Modernism freely grants the truth of the ethics of Jesus, and criticizes only the Church's doctrine

of His person, we reply: First, the ethics of Jesus would have been as powerless as the Decalogue to have healed human woe, and to have transformed the face of history. Second, you cannot separate between Jesus' ethics and His person. The fact of Jesus Christ is one. He must be taken as a whole, or else left as a whole.

Our Attitude a Choice

And let it be remembered, whatever attitude we take toward Him, we take it not as intellects alone, but as personalities in the full use of all our faculties. Every ultimate conclusion about Jesus Christ is a personal choice and venture. If a man chooses to accept the apostolic portrait of Jesus as historically reliable, this choice is supported by three powerful arguments: First, by the sincerity, consistency, and solid weight of the apostolic witness to Jesus itself. Second, by the fact that this apostolic portrait of Jesus meets and satisfies the age-old longings of the human race. Third, by the circumstance that man's moral nature urges him to belief. Jesus ought to be true. The moral majesty of the universe is reduced where men fail to believe in Jesus.

And if, on the contrary, a man chooses to make the opposite venture, and to hold that the apostolic portrait of Jesus is inaccurate and non-dependable, this choice is just as truly a personal venture hav

ing its explanation in part in motives of the heart. It is time for rationalism generally, and for Modernism in particular, to face itself with analytical sincerity, and to cease from its characteristic boastfulness. The philosophical point of view of naturalism is not intellectually superior to that of supernaturalism. Naturalism and supernaturalism are simply different personal ventures in fundamental philosophy. Naturalism gives major emphasis to impersonal values, and to the objective mechanical order. Supernaturalism gives more emphasis to the personal and the ethical, and, it is my personal belief, inquires more deeply into the mystery of things (naturalism does not seek to go behind secondary causes, it is positivistic. Supernaturalism ever seeks the first Cause).

A final word. Man's relation to Jesus in this life, and clear to the end of this life is a personal intention, a personal moral venture: consequently the truth of Jesus can never be a demonstration. There is, however, a wonderful inner certainty that the Holy Spirit gives us when we venture upon ~~our~~ our Lord, that has the convincing power of an objective vision. We venture, and He meets us as we believe upon Him. He satisfies us so completely, that at times, we are conscious of no personal effort in our faith; we simply believe, realize His powerful all-sufficiency, and are satisfied. And yet I cannot think that Christian experience is in this life ever permanently thus. Most of the time there will

be the need for some measure of personal intention in our faith: for it seems clearly to be the Creator's purpose that neither truth nor destiny should be open to men save as they are vitalized through and through by personal intention.

CHAPTER V

THE LOWER OR NEGATIVE VIEWS OF CHRIST'S PERSON

TRUTH belongs to men in dependence upon God, and not to mere intellect, alone separate from the deeper moral faculties, and from the touch of God.

Kant taught that religion is a conclusion of moral reason rather than of purely intellectual argumentation. Bishop Butler similarly taught that religious truth is never an intellectual certainty, but is simply a practical moral probability sufficient for conduct.

Plato, who lived two millenniums before Kant and Butler, confessed the futility of man's quest for truth except as he might be assisted by a divine revelation. He said in substance: Man in his search for the truth is like one who might seek to sail the ocean upon a raft without rudder, sail, or oars. He cannot come to any haven. Nor can we arrive at truth unless the gods send us some one from themselves to bring us a revelation.

The Rise of the Lower Conception of Christ

We can lay down, then, three generalizations, which the facts of man's intellectual and religious history will bear out:

1. Pure intellectualism leads to skepticism.

2. The unassisted moral and intellectual approach to truth discovers only uncertain and unsatisfying religious probabilities.

3. Abiding truth can only be possessed by men who pursue it with all the powers of their being, assisted by a divine revelation.

Beginning with the Apostles and coming down across the centuries there is a mighty stream of religious faith which has accepted the New Testament Revelation in all of its sublimity, and which has experienced, through it, an abiding moral peace and spiritual triumph. But interrupting this stream of faith, as a result of recurring manifestations of intellectualism and rationalism, there have appeared repeated eddies of unbelief.

Sometimes these eddies have been sufficiently developed to seem to threaten the further progress of the main stream of faith; but always they have had their origin either in a non-moral intellectualism or else in the hostility of intellectualism to revelation.

When these eddies have been expressions of a non-moral intellectualism they have tended toward

complete skepticism. When they have simply manifested an hostility to revelation in the interest of man's independence and self-sufficiency, they have developed into an unstable religious rationalism.

Thus, speaking of Gnosticism, the first great departure from Christian faith, Dorner says:

> "Common to all Gnostic sects is their opposition to that merely empirical faith with which they charge the church, as being founded upon authority (revelation) alone." [1]

Seeberg similarly says of it: Gnosticism "sought to elevate Christianity to the position of the universal religion, by combining in it all the tendencies and energies of the age, and thus adapting it to the comprehension of all, and satisfying the needs of all.

"Thus revelation was to be combined with the wisdom of the world, and Christianity by this means become a modern religion.

"It was the first attempt in the history of the church to bring the world into subjection to the church by interpreting Christianity in harmony with the wisdom of the world." [2]

Again, and in similar vein, speaking of modern Unitarianism, the new Gnosticism, Theodore Parker says: Unitarianism "began among a class of cultivated men in the most cultivated part of

[1] Hagenbach, Hist. of Doc., Vol. I, page 59, quoting Dorner, page 353.

[2] Seeberg, Hist. of Doc., Vol. I, page 94.

America; with men who had not the religious element developed in proportion to the intellectual or the æsthetic element." [1] And Fisher in his History of Church Doctrine says of this same movement that "Unitarianism has frequently gone hand in hand with literary criticism and belles-lettres cultivation." In other words the eddies of unbelief, whether ancient or modern, that have dimmed or confused the light of faith have been expressions either of an intellectualism that has been defective in moral passion, or of an intellectual assertiveness that has been timid of revelation. In part we will be able to see this for ourselves upon the very surface of the facts as we make our hasty survey.

Ebionism

The earliest negation of the Christian faith was Ebionism, from, "ebion," poor—the poor followers of the poor Christ. They accepted a gospel corrupted from our Matthew. Irenæus tells that they gave major emphasis to the Mosaic law, regarded Jesus simply as one of the prophets, affirmed His natural birth of Joseph and Mary, and his enduement with the Spirit at His Baptism. Their great hope was in the millennial reign of God upon the earth.[2]

[1] Fisher, Hist. Chr. Doc., page 424 quoting Weiss's life of Parker, Vol. 1, page 270.

[2] Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I, pages 351–352.

This was not a part of the Gnostic movement but was a corrupting of Christianity by Judaism. Ebionism is probably the outworking of that primitive Judaizing movement which in New Testament times opposed St. Paul. Epiphanius says it was developed in Pella as early as 75 A. D. Hegesippius speaks of it as developed in Jerusalem in 107 A. D.[1]

Gnosticism

But Gnosticism also developed during the first Christian generation. Cerenthus who lived and taught during the lifetime of St. John might be called the first of the Gnostics.

He regarded the God of the Old Testament as an emanation or outflowing of a higher divinity. Jesus was of natural birth but superior to man. He received the Christ spirit at His baptism, and thereby the power of performing miracles. The Christ spirit departed from Him before death, upon the cross. He rose from the dead. We get a good picture of Gnosticism in Irenæus' synopsis of the teaching of the Gnostic Valentinus.[2]

The original divinity is a two-fold being that Valentinus calls by the names Unspeakable and Silence.

This original diad produces another, which he

[1] Seeberg, History of Doctrine, Vol. I, page 88.
[2] Ire., Vol. 1, Chapter II, section 1.

names, Father and Truth. From this second diad come World, Life, Man and Church.

Christ is another and lower emanation in this downward movement of the divine life. Professor Faulkner summarizes the teachings of Gnosticism about as follows:[1]

1. The supreme God is pure spirit.

2. This divine life unfolded downward producing lower emanations which created the world, and gave to men the Old Testament revelation.

3. Sin developed as a result of the contact of Spirit with matter.

4. The Christ is one of the emanations of the divine life that became for a time associated with the man Jesus, revealing the true God.

5. Redemption is by taking hold of this divine revelation in Christ, and subjecting one's self to it. It involves also subjecting one's self to the secret ascetic conditions which separate spirit from gross matter.

There is little of Christianity left in Gnosticism. It held a comparatively high estimate of Christ's person, and of the value of His teachings. It classified the Christian revelation with human philosophies thus seriously corrupting it. Says Seeberg, Gnosticism's claim to be Christian rests upon its high estimate of Christ and His teachings as absolute truth.[2]

[1] Compare Faulkner, Crises in the Early Church, pages 38–40.

[2] Seeberg, History of Doctrine, Vol. I, page 100.

Monarchism

The next eddy confusing the main stream of Christian faith was Monarchism, one ruler, one God, Unitarianism.

Its earliest expression was in the small sect of the Alogi of which we hear in the latter part of the second century. There is little definitely known about them. They seem to have rejected John's Gospel, and to have regarded Jesus as a human being in whom the divine power dwelt. Dorner, however, denies this and defends them against the charge of denying Christ's Deity.[1]

The Monarchian view came to more detailed expression in Theodotus, the leather maker of Byzantium, who taught in Rome about 190 A. D. He held that Jesus was simply an extraordinary man, but that he was virgin born, and always good. The Spirit came upon him at His baptism, and empowered Him to work miracles.

Theodotus' views were more fully developed two generations later by the worldly minded Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata (260 A. D.), who taught as follows:

1. Jesus was a human being simply, but virgin born.

2. The divine wisdom dwelt in him from birth, as a man's reason dwells in his mind.

[1] Hagenbach, Hist. of Doc., Vol, I, page 61, quoting Dorner, page 500.

3. This divine indwelling was similar to that in the experience of the prophets of Israel, save that it was more full in Christ, and that it abode in Him (continually).

4. He was born pure, and by fine moral choices remained pure. As a reward for this God gave Him the power of working miracles.

5. He became the savior of men by overcoming the sin tendency of the race. He thus achieved moral oneness with God, and came to have the value of God.[1]

Arianism

After Monarchism the next of the negative doctrines of Christ's person that we need to notice is Arianism. It differs from Monarchism chiefly in that it conceives of the divine wisdom which indwelt Christ as having been first brought to expression as a premundane being, an angel. The uncreated wisdom of God, the whole wealth of the divine mind and motive, God brought to expression in this created being, whom, later, He incarnated by Mary to be the Savior of the world. Paul of Samosata and the Monarchists generally differ from the Arians in that they taught no premundane existence of Christ. For them He began as a personality at His earthly birth of the Virgin Mary.

[1] Seeberg, History of Doctrine, Vol. I, pages 163–165.

Arianism is thus the highest of the defective conceptions of Christ. It makes Christ a creature, sacrificing the trinitarian basis of Christianity. It seeks to give Him the value of God, but it denies that he is God. It claims that He was made immutable as a reward for his earthly faithfulness; and that this was done through the divine foreknowledge before the incarnation. But both the majesty and immutability of Christ are, according to Arius, expressions of the Father's creative purpose. Christ does not, in his view, share the divine nature, He shares rather the nature of creaturehood. Immutability is indeed given to Him, but it is as a divine act in time, and not as a part of the eternal process of the divine life. It is a high conception of Christ, but it comes short, by infinity, of the New Testament truth about Him. It is, nevertheless, the highest of the several defective Christologies.

It is higher than Gnosticism which makes Christ the incarnation (sometimes only in a docetic sense) of one of the lower emanations of divinity.

It is higher than Monarchism which makes Christ simply a divinely endued man.

It is higher than Socinianism, which was to appear a thousand years later, because that conception denies to Christ any premundane existence and regards His divine characteristics as attained only beyond the Resurrection.

It is higher than modern Unitarianism, because

while Channing also regarded Christ as preëxistent (He preëxisted as an angel), his doctrine was not as well developed as Arius'. Parker whose point of view displaced Channing's in the Unitarian communion regarded Jesus simply as a man.

And it is higher, too, than the current Modernism; for in so far as Modernism has developed any definite doctrine of Christology it has shown a tendency to react toward the weak views of Paul of Samosata. Its non-metaphysical Christ is an intellectual evasion, and its moral divinity is a subterfuge and a pretense. Halting faith did its best in the thinking of Arius. It is doubtless because of this intellectual superiority of Arianism that the Church's conflict with that defective view was so severe and so prolonged.

Socinianism

Socinianism, arose chiefly in Italy and had its principal development in Poland. It is a striking fact that this expression of the negative attitude toward Christ should have arisen out of contact with the widespread Italian skepticism of the time. Hurst sees three intellectual forces uniting to produce Socinianism: the critical spirit of Italian renaissance, Rationalism, and hostility to Rome.

Three names are chiefly in emphasis in the unfolding of this 16th century Unitarianism, namely, Michael Servetus, 1509–53, Lælius Socinus, 1525–

62, and Faustus Socinus, 1539–1604. The theological studies of the elder Socinus were developed by his nephew Faustus, who was doubtless familiar also with the opinions of Servetus. He left Geneva shortly after the burning of the latter under Calvin.

Servetus held the Logos to be God's eternal thought, of which the world is the expression, and Christ is the center. The realization of this idea in creation is the self-expression of God in time.

He regarded Christ as of supernatural birth, his body being a divine substance fitted for the incorporation of the Logos.[1]

Socinus seems to have shared these views. He regarded the idea of two natures in Christ as an impossibility. Jesus, for him, was simply a human being, who became divine, by adoption. He believed, however, that after His Resurrection Jesus came to exercise a real dominion, including authority to judge the world. Socinus also taught that He could without impiety be adored and invoked.

In his doctrine of the Cross, Socinus was consistent with his low view of Christ's person. The Cross was not a propitiatory sacrifice. It was simply a manifestation of the divine compassion, proving the divine willingness to forgive. Salvation, as a consequence, was not by justifying faith in Christ, but was rather by man's own moral obedience to the will of God, which will, Socinus taught, could be known only through revelation. As to the Resur-

[1] Fisher, History of Christian Doctrine, page 321.

rection, Socinus admitted its truth. Jesus did indeed rise from the dead, thus establishing the certainty of the divine offer of forgiveness.

Socinus' method of explaining away the various Biblical expressions teaching a redemption for sin in the death of Christ is most interesting. He puts them in four groups.

1. Passages which speak of Redemption by Christ. These are all figurative.

2. Passages which set forth, that Christ died for our sins. These mean either that human sin resulted in Christ's death, or else that Christ died to win us from our sins.

3. Passages which represent Christ as having borne our sins. These mean that he took them, in that he persuaded us to abandon them.

4. Passages which express the expiatory and priestly idea. The expiatory idea is rejected on the ground that there is no such idea in the Old Testament from which the New Testament ideas are derived. The priestly idea is explained as referring simply to Christ's communication of the forgiveness of God to men.

Socinus' criticisms of the Christian position on the Atonement of Christ are: Punishment is strictly individual and not transferable. Forgiveness is inconsistent with satisfaction. God's justice is not of his nature but of his will.[1] Anyone read in Modernism will recognize a familiar atmosphere in

[1] Fisher, *op. cit.*, pages 320-324.

surveying these views. Modernism is thus seen to be mediæval in fact.

Unitarianism

The next major development of the lower view of Christ's person was in New England during the closing decades of the 18th century and the opening decades of the 19th. Before the Revolutionary war Jonathan Mayhew had held and given voice to anti-trinitarian views. He had sought to evade the resulting criticism by deprecatory remarks about "metaphysical niceties," and "speculative points." He denounced with vigor the habit of magnifying the importance of opinions as compared with practice, saying, "since the substance of a Christian's duty is love to God and to our neighbor, this shows us what a Gospel minister's preaching ought chiefly to turn upon."

One cannot read these sentences from Mayhew, which are more than a hundred and fifty years old, without realizing, not their similarity, merely, but their actual identity with the defense now being made by Modernists of their continual belittling of doctrine. Mayhew and the Modernists both belittle doctrine because they mean to deny it. To belittle a truth is the best possible introduction for its denial. Mayhew belittled the great Christian facts before the Revolution; thirty years later in 1788 James Freeman repudiated them, and was or-

dained the first professedly Unitarian clergyman in New England.

The two principal names in the development of New England Unitarianism are, Wm. E. Channing and Theodore Parker. Channing began to be prominent about 1815, Parker about 1840. Channing was an Arian whose thinking was poorly worked out. Parker was a thoroughgoing rationalist repudiating miracles and holding Jesus as a human being simply.

Channing's theology may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. He had a feeble grasp upon depravity. He realized the dignity of human nature but did not feel its sin and shame.

2. He relied upon education to do the work of regeneration.

3. He regarded Christ as an incarnate angel who had brought men the revelation of God's fatherhood, and light and triumph through His Resurrection from the dead.

4. Salvation was through Christ's teaching, character, miracles, Death and Resurrection as giving authority to the two major ideas, namely, the fatherhood of God and the immortality of the soul. Channing could not adjust himself to the New Testament truth of the Atonement; but he was too sensitive to the fact of Revelation to reject it radically.[1]

[1] Fisher, *op. cit.*, pages 428–435.

It was left for Parker to complete the development of Channing's negations into a thoroughgoing naturalism. He denied miracles altogether, pronouncing them mere myths. He classified Christianity among the ethnic religions, holding that it was, like them, purely naturalistic in origin. He reduced essential beliefs to a minimum, and asserted these to be certainties by the light of nature. Jesus Christ thus became a mere human teacher. Incarnation, miracle, and revelation all three disappeared.[1]

At first Unitarians objected to these fuller negations. Channing resisted them. But they had no basis for their resistance. They had called for unrestricted mental freedom. "They had," as Fisher says, "uttered a constant protest against 'the system of exclusion' which thrusts men out of the pale of the Church for their opinions. They had made it a merit to cast off the yoke of creeds." [2] Now when Parker and his associates cast off the yoke of the earlier Unitarianism they were moved to protest but could not. Parker's views soon came to be recognized as an admissible type of Unitarian theology.

Modernism

We come here to the end of the historical phase of our discussion. New England Unitarianism was

[1] Fisher, *op. cit.*, pages 433–34.
[2] *Ibid.*, page 435.

the last historical expression of the lower and negative view of Christ's person. But we are now living in the midst of the most serious assault of negative thought upon Christian truth that has been made in sixteen hundred years. It has named itself, "Modernism." It is a liberalizing movement, which in America has been largely a system of negations. The average Modernist allows Himself to deny one fragment of truth after another without stopping to consider the effect of his negations upon Christian truth as a whole. He does not know how much of Faith he is surrendering; nor does he know to what degree the evidence for Christian truth as a whole might compel him to modify his negative attitude toward some of its details. The principal motives behind this current assault upon Faith seem to be three: rationalism; a devotion to evolutionary philosophy; a desire to adjust Faith to the widely acclaimed "assured results," and to certain naturalistic currents in science.

In actual fact these three are one: for evolutionary philosophy is simply the hypothesis of rationalism erected into a dogma; and the conclusions of criticism and the naturalistic currents in science are very largely based upon the assumed truth of the evolutionary point of view.

Our interest, however, is not in explaining Modernism, so much as it is in discovering what Modernism is, and what is its conception of Jesus Christ. We are saying, that in America it developed

largely as a liberalizing movement, an increasing system of negations. First there were criticisms of the Old Testament, the human element was magnified at the expense of the divine. Then theologians differed with St. Paul; he had misapprehended Jesus. Then the Fourth Gospel was not apostolic, its portrait of Jesus was Pauline. Then there was the assertion of late elements thrust into the synoptic records. At last Jesus himself was errant, His Virgin Birth was historically uncertain and biologically difficult; the accounts of His Resurrection were contradictory, and scarcely believable. After all a spiritual resurrection was an easier idea, and more in harmony with modern thought. Then too the spiritual portrait of Jesus' life, it was asserted, was the valuable thing, and not the metaphysical question of His personal preëxistence in the eternal being of God. The latter idea was an abstraction of Greek philosophy, quite unimportant. Thus bit by bit Modernism pared away the Christian faith until nothing remained but an unexplained portrait of a unique but errant moral figure, standing in the midst of the gropings of the centuries, superior to them, and yet a part of them.

Modernism has done very little that is constructive. Dr. Fosdick admits as much, and stands it as a criticism against his own group. Perhaps the best effort to express Modernism constructively and fundamentally is to be found in the volume by Professor Edwin Lewis of the Methodist Semi-

nary at Madison, N. J., "Jesus Christ and the Human Quest." Professor Vedder's (of Crozier) "The Fundamentals of Christianity" is constructive, but it is not fundamental. It leaves the question of Jesus' person indefinite. Professor Drown of the Episcopal Seminary at Cambridge, Mass., does the same thing in his book, "The Creative Christ." He tried in this volume to work out the idea that there is no advantage in going behind the expressional value of Christ to the metaphysical. Dr. Swain in his "What and Where is God" teaches that Christ is divine; but it is only in a low sense that makes divinity predicable also of all Christians. Dr. Fosdick's "Modern Use of the Bible" sets forth that Christ's Deity and ours differ only in degree; but neither does he handle the question thoroughly and fundamentally. Professor Lewis' volume thus remains the best discussion of the person of Christ from the Modernist point of view. We will let him speak for his group.

Professor Lewis is a Socinian in his doctrine of salvation. In his doctrine of Christ's person he harks back to the Monarchism of Paul of Samosata.

Christ is, for him, one who began life simply as an unusual human being (he evades the question of the Virgin Birth). His own fine choices, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit are responsible for the unique character which he achieved. This char-

acter approached so close to divine perfection that at the last he came perfectly to understand God; God seized him; he seized God; there was a coalescing of the human and the divine; there was, expressionally, a perfect divine incarnation.

Thus construed, Christ is eternal only in the sense that his character is the ideal humanity God had always had in mind. Jesus' consciousness of eternity is to be understood also, only in this sense. "Before Abraham was I am," does not mean that his personal self-consciousness antedates Abraham, but that the value of his moral attainments He senses as absolute, as being as ageless as God.[1]

Professor Lewis uses superlative language about Jesus; but every negative doctrine of Christ's person that has been offered to the Church has done the same. For the Monarchians he had the value of God, Arius called him the Son of God and worshiped him as being, by divine gift, immutable. Socinus allowed that he could be both adored and invoked. And many of the early Unitarians, while they followed Channing in denying deity to Christ, nevertheless continued to regard him with the same reverence and faith as they had under the earlier Trinitarian theology. It is a striking phenomenon of religious thought and life that the attitudes of the heart are not always consistent with the conclusions of the mind. In the first generation, and

[1] Lewis, Jesus Christ and the Human Quest, page 341.

to a considerable degree, a Christian attitude of heart often survives the development of negative and anti-Christian opinions.

But returning to Professor Lewis' book: his fine language about Christ must not be allowed to blind us to the poverty of his doctrine of Christ's person. He says: "There is no proper sense in which the Babe who lay in the arms of Mary, and to whom was given the name of Jesus, was at the same time also 'the Christ.'" He also says: "The Son of God was not the little Lad who played in the streets of Nazareth, but the despised and rejected Man of Sorrows"; again, he says: "He does not cease to be Jesus the Son of Mary because he has become 'the Christ of God.'" Professor Lewis specifically rejects that idea of Incarnation which involves an instantaneous and complete transfer by conception of a separate divine self-consciousness to human conditions. He says it is unsupported in a sound Scripture exegesis, it is psychologically inconceivable, and philosophically impossible.

These citations, already made, are from pages 318–320 of his volume. But the idea they express runs through the whole book. The only deity he ascribes to Jesus is the divine value of His character which he looks upon as His own achievement rather than as the manifestation of His eternal Sonship. Thus he says Jesus "achieved moral goodness";[1] and again, Jesus was the Son of God be-

[1] Lewis, *op. cit.*, page 96.

cause He achieved something.[1] If Professor Lewis were presenting Jesus as the Son of God from eternity it would be inappropriate for him to offer an explanation of His character. As the Son of God from eternity, Jesus would share the eternal I AM of God. To EXPLAIN HIS CHARACTER OF SONSHIP IS TO DENY ITS ETERNITY. IT IS TO DENY THAT HE IS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SENSE THE SON OF GOD. Professor Lewis has no Incarnation. What he offers to the Church is a human figure who achieved a moral character which has the expressional value of an incarnation. Thus he says: "The one absolutely perfect human life is by virtue of that perfection God manifest in the flesh";[2] and again: "If all creation involves a degree of incarnation" (that is, expression of God) or "if any life bespeaks the divine creativity then the One True Life bespeaks it also, only more fully."[3] It is rather striking that Professor Curtis, whom Dr. Lewis succeeded at Drew, begins his discussion of the Incarnation by repudiating this very idea which Lewis is promulgating. We quote from Professor Curtis' The Christian Faith.[4] He says: "This means that we start, not as many theologians do with the man Jesus, but with the Son of God living personally, self-consciously, in the glory of the Godhead, Jesus

[1] Lewis, *op. cit.*, page 102.
[2] *Ibid.*, page 295.
[3] *Ibid.*, page 325.
[4] Curtis, The Christian Faith, page 233.

Christ is God become man, not man become God. We must instantly reject this view of a very peculiar man, or even of a miraculous man [1] gradually coming nearer and nearer to God, gradually being more and more filled with divine potency, gradually being more and more conjoined with God, until at last Christ is very God."

One other item. It is about thirty years, according to Dr. Clarence True Wilson, since the first conscious and deliberate effort of Modernists in America to modify the fundamental faith of Methodism. At the start they were satisfied simply to insist upon certain critical views about parts of the Old Testament. Fifteen years ago, when this writer first became conscious of the Modernist drive in our Church, there were a few men who would go so far as to distinguish between the authority of JESUS and the opinions of Paul and the other apostles. To-day Modernism has developed so rapidly that Dr. Rall in Garrett Biblical Institute at Chicago boldly charges even the Master with error (Jesus expected to return in objective form during the life time of the men who had crucified him, but was mistaken), and now Dr. Lewis of Drew reduces the Incarnation to a DIVINELY INSPIRED HUMAN LIFE. It is not God made flesh, a manifestation in human life of the eternal personal Son of God, it is, instead, a mere human being so

[1] Compare Lewis, *op. cit.*, page 295.

divinized that God has achieved a complete self-expression through Him.

We do not need to point out that this human Jesus cannot possibly stand to Christian faith as the equivalent of the Strong Son of God of the Creeds. Fine language used about Him cannot hide from Christian hearts His reduced size. Lewis represents Jesus as being in much of his thought and teaching a child of his age;[1] and to the last, in spite of the fine expression, "Progressive" Incarnation, he never presents Him as anything more than an extraordinarily empowered human life through whom God finally succeeded in getting Himself into complete expression.[2] To such a human figure one cannot pray, for He has not omniscience. In such a human figure one cannot trust, for He has not omnipotence. The death of such a human figure can have no abiding significance for humanity. Indeed, it may be questioned whether proud self-sufficient human reason would accept permanently even the moral leadership of such a figure. Professor Lewis has tried to reinterpret the Incarnation under the modern category of progress. He has desired to preserve every great Christian value. We would like to feel that he had succeeded. But we are compelled to conclude the opposite. Professor Lewis' Christ, when men have meditated upon him sufficiently to have evaluated Him, will

[1] Lewis, *op. cit.*, pages 109–111.

[2] Pages 328, 329, 330; 341–42, should be especially noted.

be acceptable to no one. He will not satisfy "modern" men, whom Lewis seeks to please, for he is a supernatural figure. He will not satisfy Christian faith, for he is not God. Professor Lewis has sacrificed the Theanthropic Person and offers to faith once more a little Unitarian Christ.

Thus five times over has the Christian Church faced substantially these same negative views which are to-day being offered to us as Modernism. Five times it has refused them. It will refuse them again, the sixth.

The so-called "assured results," which were the occasion for this new development of negative thought, are now being effectively challenged. They are already, in considerable part, surrendered by many scholars of the first standing. The evolutionary philosophy, which was the chief foundation of these critical conclusions, is still popular among scientists; but among those having accurate information it is fully recognized as a philosophical faith rather than as a scientific principle. Negative thought thus stands stripped of every other foundation save the personal equation—the personal choice of naturalism and rationalism to replace the older supernaturalism of moral faith. The mists of pseudoscience and exaggerated assertion are cleared away, and man, with all the outreaching infinities of his spiritual nature, stands face to face with the Biblical portrait of the Christ of prophecy, of history and of Pentecost, the Son of God In-

carnate, God in flesh, to accept Him or refuse Him.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." It is the personal equation. We face Christ, and we choose. It is not scholarship, it is hearts. The Church makes one choice, and is organized to help men make and maintain that choice. Rationalism makes the other. No man, who has made the rationalistic choice, has any right to insist upon forcing his negative opinion upon the Christian community, which through two thousand years has chosen for its venture in moral faith the opposite opinion: That in the person of Jesus Christ very and eternal God actually came into this finite created world of human personality, aspiration, and sin to redeem and to save.

CHAPTER VI

BELIEF IN THE CHRISTIAN CREED A SUPREME MORAL AND PERSONAL ATTAINMENT

AGAIN and again in our discussion the idea of personality and of personal moral intention has been stressed. We touch it once more here. A man's creed is his moral and personal achievement, or perhaps better, attainment, in reciprocity with God.

Belief is an absolute necessity of great living. The life made known through sense experience is too small for the soul. Man must believe his universe out, wider than sense reveals it, or else suffocate within the narrow bounds of experience.

Life as we know it in sense experience fails everywhere. We long for Truth; but our intellects are unable to discover Truth. We long to achieve Righteousness; but Righteousness is beyond our powers. We dream of Love and Blessedness; but all our love and all our happiness is blemished. Then finally, we long for Life, to live endlessly; but alas, we begin to die the moment we are born.

Against all this failure and incompleteness man's soul is in perpetual protest. Life must endure; life must arrive. The soul cannot believe in duty, or en-

dure to love, if duty and love are only for a day. Neither can the soul accept its present failure and limitation as final. And so inevitably, we believe. By faith we press out the bounds of our universe until there is room within it for our souls to move about. This unquestionably is the rise of faith, and it is doubtless as old as man.

The Antiquity of Belief as an Approach to Truth

This antiquity of belief, as a means of arriving at truth, is sufficiently important to warrant a moment's further consideration. Belief is man's oldest approach to truth. We date the rise of the natural sciences from the time of Francis Bacon, a little over three hundred years ago. We date the rise of philosophy from the time of Thales, who lived in Greece during the seventh century B. C., about two millenniums and a half ago. But we date the rise of belief from the first aspiring, disappointed experience of a human heart which stood somewhere beside some open grave and said, Not in this life, but to-morrow. Perhaps, though, it is not fair to date the rise of faith from that first aspiring human cry since that first cry was not fruitful for faith as the thinking of Thales was for philosophy, and that of Bacon was for science. A better date for the rise of faith would be the westward emigration of Abraham, who moved into the

Syrian plains four millenniums ago in obedience to the voice of God in his soul, and who became thus the father of the faithful.

Centuries then before science had produced at all, and centuries, too, before philosophy had produced anything of permanent value, faith had laid hold upon a multitude of sublimities. Moses had received the Ten Words, David had written the Shepherd Psalm, Isaiah had seen the vision of the Messianic Kingdom and of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, and Israel had been long proclaiming in its daily worship the unity and ethical majesty of God. Belief, then, is not to be discounted. It has produced supreme and abiding values in the intellectual world. It is a means of approaching truth as valid as either philosophy or science. It has its own criteria; and its authority measured by the permanence of its conclusions is higher than that of either of the other approaches to truth.

When men have come to believe a number of important items, which are interpretative of the universe as a whole, and which they have found to be necessary to their moral respect for life and the universe, this total body of belief is a creed. A creed, then, is a comprehensive body of belief affirming the reality of transcendent values necessary to man's moral and spiritual fulfillment, but not revealed in sense. The Christian Creed is such a comprehensive body of belief organized about the person and revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

The Criteria of Belief

This is a good place to notice the significance of the moral emphasis in the matter of creeds. A creed is distinguished from a superstition by precisely this emphasis. A belief that is a mere fanciful imagination, and that is supported by no deep moral urgency is as intellectually remote from the Christian Creed as it is from science. Moral reality is as good a test of certitude as empirical, or sense, reality. A belief or creed that is not exactingly tested by the soul's moral and spiritual criteria is a mere superstition. The careful thinker will discriminate between the morally tested beliefs and those which are not, just as he discriminates between the empirically tested speculations of science and those which are not. A scientific speculation not empirically verified is as devoid of authority as an item of belief would be which has not been tested and approved by the moral and spiritual intuitions of the race.

Belief, then, is both a legitimate and a necessary activity of the human mind and soul. A man must believe, no matter what he believes. Even if a man believes nothing, that is, nothing unrevealed in sense experience, he believes that unprovable limitation upon reality. Atheism and Nihilism are sterile creeds, but they are just as much creeds as is the Christian Creed. If we undertake seriously to

think and live at all we must believe,—what then shall we believe?

Rise of the Christian Creed

It has been popular for a decade to speak contemptuously of creeds. A certain American writer and preacher said recently: Any man can write a creed, but it takes a real man to live the Sermon on the Mount. We object to such sprightly but shallow remarks all too frequently made. We freely admit that the Sermon on the Mount is quite beyond man's uninspired ability; but we are compelled to assert as much concerning the Christian Creed. We are not saying that Athanasius and the Church fathers at Nicæa must have been inspired, though this may easily have been true; but we are saying that Nicæa's sublime statement would have been impossible apart from that supernatural self-disclosure of God to men, which stretches through two millenniums of history from Abraham to Christ and the apostles. Any man may indeed, be able to write a creed; but we seriously question whether the maker of the above thoughtless remark could possibly write one that would interest any considerable number, even in his home town, not to say write one that would command the supreme devotion of nations, and continents of men for generations, and millenniums of time. This is what the Christian Creed has done, and what it still is doing.

No, the Christian Creed is not the creation of some single individual in his spare moments; it is the fruition of centuries of human aspiration and striving, sin and repentance, victory and defeat, in conjunction with an increasing divine self-disclosure.

It is a mighty story. Abraham moves westward into the solitudes to be alone with that Ethical Omnipotence who has called him. A nation inherits his experience. Israel comes to have a consciousness of separation, and is isolated from the nations that surround her. There are trials and persecutions. There are mighty providential deliverances. There are moral sublimities, and awful national apostacies. There are revelations, heroes, martyrdoms. Lawgivers, judges, kings, and prophets appear, perform their appointed tasks, and are gone. There are periods of national splendor, and periods of national degradation and exile; but through it all, and out of it all God is unfolding one increasing hope, the hope of the Messianic King, and the Messianic Kingdom. Prophets foresee its coming. They announce its certainty. Perfect righteousness will be realized. God, Himself, will realize it. He will send to men His servant, whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." This servant of God will be a suffering servant. He will bear man's iniquity, the chastisement of man's peace will be upon Him, and by His stripes we will be healed. He will rewrite

God's law in our hearts. He will make God's righteousness our human point of view. He will establish His Kingdom to the ends of the earth, and it shall endure forever and forever.

All this was prophetically foreseen and fore-announced and then came the fulfillment. Jesus is born in Judæa. He fulfills all prophetic hope. He more than fulfills it; He illuminates it; He reveals its inner meaning. He is spotless in life, matchless in truth, mighty in power. He commands the forces of nature with the authority of a captain of soldiers. He yields His life a redemptive sacrifice for sin. He dies and is buried. Three days death holds Him, and then He bursts the tomb. He is alive from the dead. He is alive forevermore. Through forty days He manifests Himself to witnesses whom He has chosen. Standing among them upon the Mount of Olives, His hands uplifted in blessing, He is taken up from them into Heaven, He leaves behind Him the promise of the Paraclete, and of His return.

The scene changes. A little group of average men, fishermen, artisans, one banker, one physician, one scholarly judge, and a few others are banded together and empowered by the mystic Paraclete to be His witnesses. They witness concerning His Truth, His Cross, His Resurrection, His Salvation. They begin their witness with eager joy and love. They continue it joyously even in the face of death. One after another they lay down their lives for Him. They lay them down joyously,

yes, even exultantly. Through their testimony and joyous martyr devotion they gather about them a widening circle of believers. The Church spreads throughout the empire. It is persecuted. They are burned. They are gnawed to death by dogs. They are crucified. Generations come and go. The threat of death still hovers over the infant Church. Martyrs and confessors are multiplied to thousands upon thousands; but still exultant, still triumphant, through their faith in the precious witness of Jesus, they carry His Gospel forward and outward.

And now we can seize in all its historic meaning the Christian Creed. It is a brief verbal summary of that sublime Christian witness through faith in which the martyr Church was able to live nobly and to die exultantly. It was written out of the white heat of all their holy devotion and sacrifice. It was the watch cry of their toil. It was the song of their victory. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." [1]

In the large sense of its Creed the Christian Church is one and has been one from the beginning. The great cleavage at the Reformation did not affect these fundamental values. In all of Christendom and through all the years they have been accepted. Here and there negative eddies have appeared but they have never permanently affected the main stream of faith. The true Church in all

[1] John 5:4.

of its divisions both Protestant and Roman has been faithful to this original deposit, the Gospel of Jesus.

This, then, is the Christian Creed. It is a brief verbal summary of that total sublime Christian witness through faith in which the martyr Church was able to live nobly and die exultantly. It is the fruition of the centuries in believing. It is a summary of three infinities: God's creative toil; God's redemptive self-sacrifice; and God's final perfect purpose. It is a sentence that is vaster than the stars; and within it the increasing multitudes of earth have found room both to live, and room to die.

Let us now gather up the threads of our argument. We have seen that belief is a human necessity. That life as known in sense experience is too small for the soul. That therefore the soul is under the absolute compulsion of enlarging its universe by believing. Then, thinking of belief as one avenue by which men approach truth, we saw that it was in fact the earliest avenue of their approach, and that it has its own thoroughly reliable criteria. We saw beliefs multiplying into creeds. We saw the Christian Creed rising out of millenniums of history, the history of a people in correspondence with God. Finally we saw the whole Christian Church organized in unity of belief about this creedal expression.

The Œcumenical Creeds

We turn now to the Creed itself. We want to linger for a while in its great consciousness, before we seek our conclusion that to achieve belief in it, or better, to achieve belief in the sublime facts and universe therein confessed is the supreme moral and personal attainment.

The Christian Creed is one in substance and intention. It might, however, be said to have a trinity of expressions. Of these the earliest is the Apostles' Creed. Of it Schaff says in his Church History: "The first express confession of faith is the testimony of Peter, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. The next is the trinitarian baptismal formula. Out of this gradually grew the so called Apostles' Creed which is also trinitarian in structure, but gives the confession of Christ the central and largest place. Though not traceable in its present shape above the fourth century, and found in the second and third in different longer or shorter forms, it is in substance altogether apostolic, and exhibits an incomparable summary of the leading facts in the revelation of the triune God from the creation of the world to the resurrection of the body; and that in a form intelligible to all, and admirably suited for public worship and catechetical use." [1] We have already seen that this

[1] Schaff, Church History, Vol. I, pages 464–65.

Creed in its main outline of facts, dates back to near the beginning of the second century. Its earliest form runs:

I believe in God the Father Almighty;

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary; He was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of the Father; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead;

And in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Church; remission of sins; the resurrection of the body.[1]

The second Creed to be produced was the Nicene. It rose out of the controversy with Arianism, and was draughted at Nicæa. In its present form it concludes a number of additions added at Constantinople in 381. Its earliest form was as follows:

We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of the Father, light of Light, very God of very God begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, and was made man; He suffered; and the third day He rose again, and ascended into heaven, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead;

[1] Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, page 535.

And in the Holy Ghost.[1]

The third of the œcumenical Creeds, so called from their universal acceptance, is known as the Athanasian Creed. It was not, however, properly so called. It was produced long after Athanasius. It is a long and technical statement that will add nothing to our argument. Both because of its late origin, and of its length, we will not reproduce it here.

The Answers of the Christian Creed

It is not our purpose in this argument to give a careful interpretation of the phraseology of any one of the Creeds; but rather to lift into such emphasis their sublime beliefs that our hearts will be able to feel their power. The Creeds are a statement of the answer found in the person and revelation of Jesus Christ to those oppressive finitudes discovered in sense experience against which the souls of men have wept their age-long protest. I want to lift up these answers into emphasis so that our hearts can rejoice in them, and sense their moral authority.

As we have already pointed out, man is aware of a mysterious infinite to which he feels that he belongs, and his soul is in everlasting moral protest against every fettering limitation that shuts him away from it.

For our purposes we can state his protest best

[1] Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, page 537.

under the head of four great mysteries: The mystery of beginnings; The mystery of truth and duty; The mystery of sin; The mystery of suffering and death. These are the mighty problems of all human thought, and it is because it brings a satisfying answer to each of these that the Christian Creed is so precious.

As facing the mystery of beginnings the Creed says: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Creator—" By a creed, and only a creed can man answer this fundamental question of beginnings. He may call his creed science or philosophy; but no matter what he calls it, it is a creed just the same. The authority of the Christian Creed, as compared with the creeds of science, is superior, both from the circumstance that it is approved in the moral and spiritual consciousness of the race and from the further fact that it is historically evidenced. As Christians we think of Jesus as both within the race and yet above it; His moral and spiritual consciousness would have the value of a revelation both completing and confirming the race's own; but for the sake of the argument, that we may meet the rationalist as nearly as possible upon his own ground, we will allow Jesus to stand entirely within the race. And now we ask: What higher test of reality is possible than that a conception is true by the standard of man's noblest powers? If we trust our senses, why not trust our consciences and our souls?

But let us return to the answer of the Creed. It stands behind all finite existence an infinite Fatherhood. That is an infinite of intelligent, responsible, moral love; a personality, the law of whose life is to give Himself; whose joy is in giving Himself. Fatherhood that throbs and thrills with the joy of giving Himself is the cause of all created things. Creation is the expression of God's Fatherhood, the joy song of His satisfied love. If anyone should find it meaningful to introduce a definitely teleological evolution, as the time order of Fatherhood's creative toil, the Christian Creed makes no objection. But the Christian Creed does object when that sublime intelligent personal moral love of the infinite Father is reduced to an unconscious instinct vaguely groping toward its goal; or to a blind force pushing unconsciously upward through struggle.

And then in answer to the mystery of truth and duty, the Creed presents the Incarnation. There is more truth in the single fact of, "God manifest in the flesh," than there is in all the thousand volumes of our learned speculation. Is God in the race? Then the race is destined unto God. Did God in flesh live our human life? Then all of duty is there revealed in Him. Spencer in the darkness of his agnostic philosophy may cry, "O why, and O why, and O why?" But the Christian who has seen God in the face of Jesus Christ can feel with certainty that the truth of life is even as Jesus phrased it:

"Father, I will that all these whom thou has given me should be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which thou hast given Me, that Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world." [1] To behold, to understand, to share the everlasting love of that infinite Fatherhood, which is behind creation, and is the motive of creation, is the certain destiny of that race to which God has come utterly near in the Incarnation; and this one certainty comprehends all truth.

But how shall we arrive? We are oppressed by the mighty mystery of sin. It is not simply that our conduct is false and mean, it is that our whole point of view is inorganic, self-driven, egoistic, futile. Deeper than the sins we commit is the whole moral confusion and failure of the race which we share. Sin is a race wide passion, a surging tide. It rushes us on to ruin. It fills and blackens history. It groans in the heart break of multitudes. It damns us in guilt and shame and helplessness. Philosophical ethics, and codes of law are as powerless to meet our situation as water is to wash leprosy from the skin. We need a mighty, supernatural, transcendent Savior. And it is this which the Creed brings us. It says: We believe "in one Lord Jesus Christ,—of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven and

[1] John 17:24.

was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man."

God not only took our flesh, but He became utterly one with our ruined sinful race. He became so one with us that the blessedness of His eternal Sonship became conditioned upon His accomplishing our redemption. He took our sin, our sorrow, our guilt, our death in His own life. He bore the utmost penalty of our sin. He triumphed over it. He lives the dynamic head of our new race, our justifier, our regenerator, our all in all. And our salvation is by unity with Him, through faith. Salvation is not a self-poised character, but a chosen identification with that racial unity whose head and glory is Christ.

If some one should raise the objection: Such a Gospel sacrifices man's moral individuality. Christ cannot redeem and save us: because every man is individual; our sin is individual; our guilt is individual; and our punishment, if it is to have any moral meaning, must be individual also,—we reply: Yes we are individual, but we are also members of a racial solidarity. The Gospel of Christ does not sacrifice our moral individuality, but it does sacrifice our immoral egoism. It is our immoral egoism that blinds us to the truth of Christ's redemptive sufficiency. It is our immoral egoism that says, "punishment, if it is to have any moral meaning, must be my own." If we could get the conscious-

ness of a racial solidarity, and of God's Son coming into utter unity with such a racial solidarity, then we would be able to see that His death would be an effective moral expression (not penalty) both from the point of view of God and of the sinner. But, let us put it down as a certainty: No man can experience ultimate blessedness as a splinter of moral personality. He must become organically one with a racial brotherhood of men. This, indeed, is the very meaning of morality. Ethics is the moral law of man's racial unity. Now just here is the Christian truth. The Son of God became one with humanity. He became so one with us that he was inseparable from us. Our guilt involved Him, Our death belonged to Him. He accepted the whole tragic total. He closed our sin history in His Cross. He died with us and for us. And then, having died unto sin once, He became alive forever more, still one with us, the head and glory of a new racial unity. He is our Justifier, our Regenerator, our all-sufficient Savior; and every one of us, who is willing to give up his egoism, and to become, by faith and the Holy Ghost, organic with Him, He saves. We must lay down every vestige of our exaggerated individualism, our self-will, our self-sufficiency, our self-glory—these more than our vices damn our souls—we must lay these down. We must in total self-despair venture upon Him as our all in all. But, if we are willing to make this self-sacrifice, and this self-identification, then

He becomes totally responsible for our salvation. This is St. Paul's truth of the Righteousness of God apart from the law. This is the Reformation principle of Justification by Faith alone.

It is a tidal wave of redeeming grace overflowing all the tides of sin. It is the inexhaustible love of God brought to us in Messiah, Jesus our Lord. It is God in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, not reckoning unto us our sins. It is the love that will not let us go in uttermost self-sacrifice to save us.

And, now, last of all, there stands the mystery of death. But already it is abolished. Death is only the outward expression of that inner futility which is the experience of every sinful personality. Sinful men must die. Sinful men ought to die. Death is God's dark line of moral judgment drawn across the face of life that has become futile through sin. But Christ hath abolished death. On the third day Jesus took again His body, the badge and instrument of His racial solidarity, and thus became the vivid promise and the actual commencement of the race's immortality.

The Faith of this Creed a Moral Achievement

I cannot more effectively conclude than by gathering up all that I have tried to say.

Man has always believed; man must believe; for

the world of sense experience is too small for the soul.

Belief is the oldest pathway to truth; it has its own exacting criteria and its conclusions are more lasting than those either of philosophy or of science.

Corresponding to this aspiring, this outreaching of man's moral and spiritual life in belief, is a mighty divine self-disclosure that was wrought out across the centuries, and that was brought to its crowning in Jesus Christ, God and man, Crucified, Risen, Ascended, our Lord, Savior and Judge.

In His light the increasing centuries have rejoiced to walk. And to show forth His glory the multiplied generations of men, patriarchs, kings, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, the holy Church throughout all the world is united in one vast ministry of praise, one vast confession of faith.

This is the Church and its Creed. It is a society for believing. It is a ministry unto believing. It is a fellowship in believing. We find ourselves when, through its total age-long ministry, we too believe. By all this age-old aspiring of men, by all this millennium long divine self-revealing, by all this sacrifice and victory of Jesus Christ our Lord, by all this devotion of martyrdom, by all this toil of praise, our hearts are helped toward believing. I think that St. Ambrose or another was trying to say just this in his noble hymn, the Te Deum

Laudamus. He pictures angels and archangels, and all the assembled ages of redeemed men, the holy Church throughout all the world united in rendering worship to the Triune God the Savior. And then just at the end he stands himself in the midst of the mighty scene. Through all this total ministry he too rises into faith. We quote his noble lines:

We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge
Thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father
everlasting.
To Thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heavens
and all the Powers,
To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually
do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of Sabbaoth,
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy
glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise
Thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise
Thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise Thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world doth
acknowledge
The Father of an infinite Majesty;
Thine adorable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
When thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man Thou didst humble Thyself to be born of a virgin.
When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.
We believe that Thou wilt come to be our Judge.

We therefore pray Thee, help thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.
Lord save Thy people and bless Thine heritage.
Govern them and lift them up for ever.
Day by day we magnify Thee;
And we worship Thy Name ever world without end.
Vouch-safe O Lord to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let Thy mercy light upon us as our trust is in Thee.

Here the Church's pæan of praise and prayer closes. The poet seems to stand alone. The faith and worship of the ages have brought him the Triune God and Jesus his Redeemer. He stands there in full self-consciousness, face to face with Him and Him alone. He believes, He prays, in individual self-entrusting faith he cries:

"O Lord, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded."

And blessed indeed is he, whomsoever he may be, who, receiving in the same way, the same precious deposit, rises with the poet into the same sublime faith.

Comparison of Belief
Between Protestantism, Rome and Modernism

We are not unconscious that Rome did overlay the precious primitive deposit with added beliefs that in practical effect largely hid the true faith. Nor are we unconscious that Rome's moral apostacy further hindered and confused the Gospel. Nor yet are we unconscious that in varying degree this condition has continued since Rome's own reformation at the Counsel of Trent. But when all of this has been said, it still remains true, that Rome never denied the fundamental deposit of faith; and that Rome is, to-day, vastly nearer to the Reformation position than is Modernism.

This statement can be made both perfectly clear and perfectly certain by a brief examination of the doctrinal basis of one of the Protestant Churches, showing how much of it Rome accepts, and how much of it Modernism accepts.

We take the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church, which are an abbreviation from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and which express in the briefest possible compass the common Protestant position.

In these twenty-five articles there are thirty-two positions, of which twenty-four are doctrinal, five disciplinary, and three social.

Of the twenty-four doctrinal positions all of them are common in Protestantism; fourteen are common as between Protestantism and Rome; and only five are common as between Protestanism and Modernism. Of the five common as between Protestantism and Modernism four are Protestant repudiations of Roman error. Protestant Christianity and Modernism are in agreement only with respect to one constructive doctrinal position. We will give a list of the doctrinal positions in the Articles noting the agreements and disagreements.

1. The tri-unity of God. Protestants and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

2. The creatorship of God. It is held by all three groups, though certain pantheistic tendencies, totally inconsistent with Christianity's view of God as transcendent creator, are clearly apparent in Modernism.

3. The eternity of the personal Son. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

4. The incarnation of the personal Son. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

5. The Virgin Birth. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies in one way or another.

6. The theanthropic person of the Redeemer, and that this union of God and man in Him is to endure forever. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

7. That Jesus Christ in His divine and human nature suffered death to make atonement for sin. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

8. That His body (transformed and glorified) was raised from the dead on the third day, and reanimated by His spirit. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

9. That He ascended into heaven and reigns. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

10. That He is coming again at the end of the ages to judge all men. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

11. The personality of the Holy Ghost. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism has a strong tendency to reduce the Holy Ghost to a divine influence. Their Trinity is: God the Father; God the Father manifest, who is named the Son (by God manifest they do not mean a divine person incarnate, but only God expressing himself through a human being); and God the Father in His spirit energy, who is named the Spirit. This is a confused modalism. It denies the Trinity, the personality and incarnation of the Divine Son, and the personality of the Spirit.

12. That man is universally fallen from original righteousness. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

13. That in man's fallen condition he is helpless to restore himself. Prostestantism and Rome hold. Modernism denies.

14. That there is restoration for those who sin after justification. Protestantism and Rome hold. Modernism does not believe in justification, and so cannot hold it.

15. The authority and sufficiency of Scripture. Protestantism holds. Rome holds to the authority of Scripture, but supplements it. Modernism is in dissent having no objective authority, or fixed truth.

16. Justification by faith alone. Protestantism holds. Rome omits the word "alone" and makes good works also a part of the ground of salvation. Modernism departs entirely from the whole conception of justification by faith. If they use the word at all it is in a totally new sense.

17. That good works stand related to justifying faith as fruit to life. Protestantism holds. Rome finds in good works an independent salvation value. Modernism regards good works as the very stuff out of which character and salvation are made.

18. The doctrine of the Church: For Protestantism it is a spiritual entity, and as such divinely inbreathed. For Rome it is inspired and authoritative not only as a spiritual entity, but also as a human organization. For Modernism it is simply a human society to promote brotherhood, largely by the inspiration of Jesus' teaching and example.

19. Baptism: For Protestantism and Rome it is a symbol and an instrument divinely instituted. For Rome it conveys Grace. For Modernism it is purely a formality.

20. The Supper: For Protestantism, its significance is like that of Baptism, save that its emphasis is upon the redeeming sacrifice and saving life of the Lord Jesus. For Rome, Christ is actually present in its elements. For Modernism it is a mere memorial of noble self-sacrifice.

21. Works of supererogation. Here Protestantism and Modernism would be in agreement in denying them. Rome of course teaches them. If the time ever comes when Modernists become constructive and systematic thinkers it will be interesting to see how they can hold to salvation by works and yet avoid this morally confusing teaching of Rome.

22. That there is no purgatory. In the Roman sense of the doctrine Protestantism and Modernism would again be in agreement in their denial. Universalism believes in retributive suffering beyond the grave, and final universal salvation. Most Modernists incline this way, and would thus make an approachment toward the Roman doctrine of Purgatory.

23. The veneration of images and relics, and the invocation of saints. Protestantism and Modernists unite again in rejecting these Roman practices.

24. That the sacrifice of Calvary is not continued in the Mass. Protestantism and Modernists for the fourth time agree in rejecting a Roman error.

Protestantism and Rome are thus seen to be in agreement upon fourteen items. They separate partly upon six items. They are in direct opposition upon four items. Protestantism and Modernism are in complete agreement in their opposition to Rome upon the four items just above. They are probably in agreement, also with respect to the creatorship of the personal transcendent God; but Modernism's hostility to the supernatural, and its exaggerated and confused emphasis upon the divine immanence make its attitude as to creation somewhat uncertain. Upon the remaining nineteen doctrinal items Protestantism and Modernism separate completely.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH

OUR theme is Christ; the Christ of the ages. We are concluding our argument with the Church. Why? Answer: because the Christ of the ages is fundamentally a figure in history, whom we know by contact with an historical witness. There is certainly a secondary or dependent inspiration through which the believer knows Christ in immediate experience; but this knowledge or inspiration is built upon the Church's witness to the historic Christ, and is impossible apart from it. The Easter fact is perpetually creating the Easter faith. The living Christ is by the Holy Ghost a present experience; because, through the Church's testimony, we believe in the historic Christ. This dependence of our living experience upon the historic witness of the Church across the generations is a circumstance of prime importance. Now and again Christian men speak with indifference concerning the critical denial of some splendid fact in the Church's total testimony to the Christ of history: because, as they say, they are rejoicing in the better value of their own heart's experience of the living Christ. But this attitude is heedlessly emotional,

and amazingly superficial. The living Christ, of whom they speak, is totally unknown where the Church's testimony to the Christ of history has not been effectively given. The current subjectivism is doubly dangerous: In the first place, it is certain to evaporate into skepticism. In the second place, it is equally certain to lose its ethical vitality. The Church needs to be equally on its guard against subjectivism, and against intellectualism. Subjectivism turns Christ into a receding image. Intellectualism turns Him into a dead fact. Faith, that is at once intellectually grounded and pneumatically energized is the true Christian value that has been so creative across the centuries. Or, to put it differently, Christ as a redemptive force in the world, must be both intellectually and spiritually appropriated. The Church, then, because it stands as the witness of Christ through which He is intellectually appropriated, is a necessary part of the total fact of Christ, as redemptively conceived.

The Church Stands to Answer the Soul

In several of John Henry Newman's spiritually powerful sermons preached at St. Mary's Oxford, he gives voice to splendid appreciations of the Christian Church. We quote from his sermon, The Church a Home for the Lonely. By the word "lonely" he is meaning all those who have been disillusioned as to this world, and its power to satisfy

the vast aspirings of the soul. They are disappointed, they long for an infinite word to speak back to the infinite within them. We quote two of Newman's beautiful paragraphs. He writes: "Our Lord Jesus Christ after dying for our sins on the Cross, and ascending on high, left not the world as He found it, but left a blessing behind Him. He left in the world what before was not in it,—a secret home for faith and love to enjoy, wherever found, in spite of the world around us.—This is the Church of God, which is our true home of God's providing." And then he goes on to describe how it meets and answers our longings, giving us back a fact and a promise as infinite as our aspirings. He says, "Thou art in a body of flesh, a member of this world, thou hast but to kneel reverently in prayer, and thou art at once in the society of saints and angels. Wherever thou art, thou canst, through God's incomprehensible mercy, brings thyself into the midst of God's holy Church invisible, and receive secretly that aid, the very thought of which is a present sensible blessing."

Newman is right. The Church is precisely this. It is the comfort of the lonely and aspiring; the one living voice that speaks back to our longing souls an infinite promise and answer. But the Church does this, not by its own power or authority, but because it is the visible witness of the invisible Christ. The infinite of its promise is the infinite of His life. And forever anew, by its life and wor-

ship this infinite of Christ is pressed upon the hearts of men to their comfort and healing. But, asks some one, what need is there for the Church thus constantly to renew its witness to Christ? Other great facts are believed by men without any such provision. What is the necessity for this extraordinary witness to make the fact of Christ convincing and effective? The answer is apparent. The fact of Christ is infinitely valuable and absolutely unique. This double peculiarity in the fact makes necessary a like peculiarity in the witness. A fact as valuable as Christ must of necessity, if it is true, make a tremendous difference to men. A fact as unique as Christ requires an extraordinary witness. A fact that is at once unique, and uniquely valuable will require then a most extraordinary witness. Thus, a fact as valuable and extraordinary as Washington is effectively witnessed by monuments of marble raised to his memory. But a fact as valuable and extraordinary as Jesus Christ can be effectively witnessed only by the increasing adoration of the ages. The Christian Church with all of its uninterrupted praise, and all of its widening influence, moral, spiritual, social, political, and economic, is necessary if the fact of Christ is to make effective impact upon the minds and hearts of men, to-day and for the future. A. J. Gordon, in his little book on the Holy Spirit, says, the Church is the continuation of the Incarnation, and, if the suggestion is not taken too rigidly, it is both

beautiful and helpful. At least this is true, that the redemptive work of Christ moves forward down the centuries only as He is perpetually mediated to men through the agency of a Spirit filled Church. We make Him real to men as we show Him forth in life and love and worship. The waters of a river are borne onward to the sea through the river channel; and so the redemptive personality of Christ is borne forward to all the generations of men through the whole life and worship of the Church. Again we say, the Church of Christ is a part of the total fact of Christ as redemptively conceived.

The Church Defined

So far we have simply been trying to seize as a large idea our consciousness and feeling toward the Church. We will need, now, to examine it more critically, and determine more exactly what is the Church's empowerment, authority and responsibility.

In the 19th article of the historic Thirty-nine of the Church of England we read; "The Visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all things that are of necessity requisite to the same."

In this article we find three main ideas: a congregation of believers; a congregation maintaining

the preaching of the pure Word of God; a congregation maintaining the ministration of the sacraments in conformity with the ordinance of Christ. The illumination of the Holy Ghost is not explicitly referred to, but He is, doubtless, implicit in all that is expressed. He is included as the atmosphere in which all the rest takes place.

A body, then, of believers, illuminated by the Holy Ghost, fellowshipping together in Jesus Christ, confessing and witnessing Him as God Incarnate, their Redeemer and Savior, both through their life and preaching, and through the ministration of the sacraments,—this is the Church. Its empowerment is the supernatural Spirit, and the total divine self-disclosure summed up and crowned in the Incarnation. Its authority is the whole fact of its empowerment. Its responsibility is to carry outward and forward with convincing and persuasive power to the utmost bounds of the human race its supreme entrustment, this total divine self-disclosure, this total fact of Christ.

Christ the All in All of the Church

The fact of Christ, then, is at once the empowerment, the authority and the responsibility of the Church. The Word of God is the divinely inspired writing by which the Church has the record of Christ. The Holy Ghost is the personal agent of the Godhead by which the Church has the inner realiza-

tion of Christ. The sacraments are divinely inbreathed words by which the Church is commanded, in part, to carry forward its convincing and persuasive preachment of Christ. Christ Himself is the all in all of the Church. It is strong when He is inwardly real in its consciousness. It is glorious when it is effectively glorifying Him. When the Church turns aside from the knowledge of Him to the knowledge of anything else, no matter what it may be; or, when the Church by its own wisdom and resource seeks to build His ideals instead of glorifying Him, then it is weak, and its glory is departed.

But, says some one, is not all knowledge valuable, and all good intention worthy? Answer: For the Church, and for all true believers Jesus Christ is all in all. No knowledge, therefore, is valuable, that is, as a part of a philosophy of being or of living, except as it stands in relation to that supreme knowledge which the Church and the believer have in Christ. And no intention is good that is not consciously dependent upon Him. But, the question is renewed: Suppose that a Christian scholar, who is not yet sure of Christ, but who is reverently seeking the light,—are not his conclusions valuable? We answer again: For the Church and for all true believers, Jesus Christ is all in all, A scholar, who is not yet sure of Christ, is not a Christian: for a Christian is precisely one who is sure of Christ, and who has made a total self-commitment to Him.

In Christian faith the believer takes Christ to be his righteousness, sanctification, and final redemption; and no man can thus entrust himself to Christ and not be sure of Him. As to the value of such non-Christian scholarly conclusions we answer: The believer must hold all opinions in subjection to His one supreme moral and spiritual certainty, Jesus Christ. The believer cannot allow the total fact of Christ to be called in question without allowing the whole basis of his life to be challenged. And the Christian Church cannot allow the total fact of Christ to be called into question without ceasing to exist.

The Christian Attitude toward Truth

But, once again, asks the questioner: How, then, can the Christian have a scientific attitude toward truth? The answer is threefold: First, we are not deeply concerned that he should have a scientific attitude toward truth; but rather, that he should have a Christian attitude toward it. Truth, it must be remembered, is, for the Christian, an interpretation of life arrived at by the exercise of a man's total moral personality, that is, by the exercise of all his faculties. The Christian attitude toward truth is thus higher than the scientific. The scientific attitude is one of loyalty to reality as revealed in sense experience only. The Christian attitude is one of loyalty to all reality, both that revealed

in the senses, that revealed in conscience, and that revealed in the soul. Second, in speaking of the scientific attitude toward truth, it is important to remember that science itself also has fundamental convictions, which it holds without having fully established them in experience. The uniformity of nature, the conservation of matter, the conservation of energy, the doctrine of descent are all of them such. Third, the Christian can have the scientific attitude toward truth at specific points, provided he has it in subservience to his Christian attitude toward truth as a whole. No one but a fool denies a fact, when it is certainly developed. But for the Christian, Christ is Himself a fact. He is the one supreme fact. He is the eternal personal Son of God become incarnate, dying and rising again for man's redemption; and the Christian feels that he is entitled to assume that every other fact will fit into this one supreme fact, when truth shall have been completed. And so it stands, that the Church is precisely a society of men, who are empowered, endued and entrusted with the total fact of Christ. This fact of Christ in all of its unique sublimity is at once the center and circumference of its life, its one reason for existence, its one supreme value for the race.

The Church through the Centuries

Nor do we offer this as a personal interpretation of the Church. Rather, we offer it as a description

of the Church's own historic self-consciousness. This is what the Church has understood itself to be from the beginning. It was, it meant to be: A living and visible witness of its invisible Lord. A careful study of Church history will show that every major development in ecclesiastical history, whether Protestant or Roman, was an expression of the Church's devotion to this supreme trust, the total fact of Christ. Take, for example, the doctrine of the Eucharist. There is a wide difference between its various statements. But whatever interpretation of it we may hold, whether it be in agreement with Zwingli at the extreme left, or with Rome at the right, the purpose is the same. In the Eucharist the Church is seeking to mediate the fact of Christ to the mind, and the experience of Christ, through the illuminating Holy Ghost, to the heart. If, with the Roman Catholic, we hold that the sacraments contain Grace, Grace must, nevertheless, be received as an idea of Christ in the mind, and an inner certainty of Christ in the heart. And if with Zwingli we hold that the Eucharist is simply a symbolic act under which together devotedly we remember the redemptive sufferings of Christ and entrust ourselves to Him, then too, the same, we receive an idea of Christ in our minds, and by the Holy Ghost an inner certainty of Christ in our hearts. Personally I am totally unable to appreciate the Roman view of the Eucharist; but, nevertheless, I am fully convinced of the Christian intention of

that view. I stood one day beside the altar in the cathedral of the Notre Dame in Paris watching the celebration of Mass. The service was not helpful to me. Christ was not mediated to me as I watched the symbolic acts of the celebrating priest and his assistants. But, by and by, the consecrating prayers were complete, the priest kissed the wafer, and turning, elevated it for the adoration of the people. The vast audience fell upon its knees. There rose a flooding volume of praise. Beside me knelt a French peasant. As he worshiped the Host I gazed into his face, and gazing, knew that for him that wafer had become in very fact the body of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer; and that Jesus Christ was present for him there, his all-sufficient Savior and Lord.

I do not mean to say that Rome's doctrine is either true or safe. In fact I do not believe that it is either one. But I do mean to say that Rome's doctrine did mediate Christ the Redeemer to that man, and that to do this was Rome's intention. In other words, whether it is Rome or Zwingli, whether it is High Church or Low Church, behind all differences of form the Christian Church has one enduement, one authority and one responsibility: THE TOTAL FACT OF JESUS CHRIST, GOD AND MAN, CRUCIFIED AND RISEN, ITS REDEEMER, SAVIOR AND LORD.

And now we want to do two things: First to bring the light of this conclusion to bear upon a number

of the problems that are to-day perplexing the Church. And, then, finally, in view of it all, to urge the practical responsibility of the Church.

The Question of Authority

The most pressing problem of the Church to-day is the question of authority. Rome has a double authority; the Scriptures, and the interpretive authority of the See of Rome. Protestantism also, in practical fact, has had a double authority: the Scriptures, and the interpretive authority of the Christian consensus. This Christian consensus, which is expressed in the historic Creeds, and in the formularies and catechisms of the various Protestant bodies, doubtless had its rise in the preaching of the Apostles. It has a dependent or interpretive authority only. It is the living voice guiding the Church from generation to generation in its interpretation of the written record. This written record, and this interpretive consensus together constitute the total fact of Christ. The Church cannot allow it to be whittled away or denied without surrendering both its enduement, its authority, and its responsibility—its very reason for existence. If the question is raised: What then; do we put chains upon the minds of men? The answer is, No. The Church makes no objection to the scholar doing all the thinking he is capable of doing, and doing it in complete freedom from re-

straint. We need, however, to remember that a man's thinking is not entirely an intellectual matter. It involves every faculty of his moral personality. The Christian scholar is a thinker who rejoices to use his intellectual faculties in submission to the total fact of Christ as the Church has received and preached Him. Should some individual scholar come to the place where he no longer rejoices thus to use his intellect, he cannot properly still be called a Christian thinker; and the Church has both the right and the duty to insist upon it that he surrender offices and responsibilities which he is no longer capable of filling. This is not persecution. It is simply fair dealing. The thinker's new attitude is not an intellectual demonstration; it is simply a personal choice, a personal venture in relation to the total problem of being and salvation. Take a concrete illustration. A young man starts his ministry a firm believer in the supernatural. After a time he feels drawn into the teaching field, and goes to a university for further intellectual equipment. He comes in contact with a teacher who repudiates the supernatural. The young man at first feels his faith challenged by this new point of view. But he fails to protect himself; and, after a time, he yields his faith in the supernatural, and decides to construe Jesus Christ, and Christianity as a purely naturalistic development. He may think his new point of view is a conclusion of his scholarship; but it is not. It is a new choice in per-

sonal belief. He has by his personal choice allowed his mind to be saturated with a morally and spiritually defective naturalism, until at last he yields to it, and renounces his intellectual submission to the total fact of Christ. He may still be true to Christian morality, he may even be able to preserve something of his eager love for Jesus; but he is not any longer a Christian thinker: because his intellectual powers are not now operating in joyous subjection to the total fact of Christ. If anyone should deny either the right, or duty of the Christian Church to insist upon the withdrawal of such a person from its teaching and preaching offices, he would, of necessity be denying also both the absolute worth of the fact of Jesus Christ Himself, and, in addition, the right of Christian men to organize to promote faith in Him.

Every peculiar theological opinion does not necessarily amount to a denial of some part of the total fact of Christ. The Church can, and should allow a considerable latitude of opinion; but the Church cannot allow the consensus of redemptive faith summarized in the Christian Creeds to be challenged or reduced without denying itself. Should the Church do this it would be a cowardly surrender of the most stupendous and precious conception that ever blessed the human race. No, to say no more, the fact of Christ is at least as probable as the theory of naturalism. It is both morally and spiritually satisfying; and socially it has been amaz-

ingly fruitful for good. Men and women have the right to organize to promote this faith. They have the right to organize universities to face all truth from this noble point of view. And teachers and preachers of ethical sensitiveness will be scrupulously faithful to such a high trust imposed in them. If some one should yet object: It is not being unfaithful to a trust to follow truth wherever it may lead; we reply: The supposition is purely theoretical. It is simply impossible that men to-day should find any facts that will subvert and disprove the total fact of Christ as the Church has received and preached Him. Men do not follow truth away from Christ. They make some fundamental venture in belief that is contrary to Christ, and then work out the consequences of their negative venture.

It is time to cease all evasion. The Christian point of view is a philosophy of life that is historically, morally and spiritually evidenced. At the heart of this point of view abides and must abide a complete personal commitment to the total fact of Christ. No man is a Christian thinker until he has made this. When a man withdraws from this, and puts a different estimate upon Jesus Christ from that which the Church has put upon Him, he ceases to be a Christian thinker. He may still be an amiable gentleman with high ideals: he may even reverence and love the prophet of Nazareth, and seek to live out His ethical ideals; but he is not any longer a Christian thinker: because his intellect is

not any longer in joyous subjection to the total fact of Christ as the Church has received it. It is totally impossible for a robust intellect to cherish a Christian faith toward a Unitarian Christ. As we allow our conception of Christ to diminish our entrusting to Him is of necessity diminished also. Enthusiasm for Christ the teacher and exemplar is remote from the Christian's self-abandoning trust in the Son of God Incarnate, crucified, risen, ascended, our Justifier, our Regenerator, our all in all. When a man has withdrawn from that total commitment to Jesus Christ as God and Savior which made him a Christian in the first place, he has ceased to be a Christian. He has ceased to be a Christian thinker. He is not capable either of thinking or of speaking from the Christian point of view.

No, by the supreme sacredness and worth of the fact of Christ as the Church has received and preached it, and by the undeniable right of Christian men to associate themselves to promote that point of view in the world, we must affirm, whatever else may be true of it, Modernism is ethically defective: because it is persistently violating a sacred trust, and is betraying men in relation to their one supreme interest.

The Church and Its Unbelieving Ministry

This brings us to the second question. The Church is face to face with a widespread denial of its

fact of Christ,—how must it face this situation? The question is partly one of principle, and partly one of practical expediency. The question of principle is: Can the Church allow its fact of Christ to be modified? And the answer is immediate: No. If the Church has a fact at all, it has only the fact that was transmitted to it. If the Church has not this fact, it is a vain pretense, and its day is done. The Church, it must be remembered, is not a humanitarian association for the promotion of brotherhood and high ethical conceptions on the basis of speculative philosophy. The Church is the witness of the fact of Christ. It must be true to that fact or cease.

But how should the Church undertake to meet the current denial of its great fact? This is not simply a question of principle, but also of practical procedure. We give answer: In meeting this practical situation the Church must aggressively challenge the negative arguments of those who seek to deny its truth (or to explain them away, which is the same thing). The Church must not shrink from battle; but neither must it ever forget that it is responsible to feed the souls of men, even while it is fighting for their faith. But let us grasp it clearly: The Church must challenge untruth aggressively unless it is willing to have untruth replace its precious entrustment. As Bishop Leete says: "There is only one successful way to oppose error; that is to oppose it. If you wish to stop a crime you

must seize the criminal, arrest and confine him.—Similarly error, untruth, Antichrist must be earnestly and resolutely opposed."

There need be no uncertainty in our minds with respect to this question: What is the most effective method by which the Church can oppose error? We have the light of history. The Church has repeatedly contended against error for the sake of its precious entrustment. How has the Church won in these other contests? How did it win against the first paganizing Gnosticism? How did it win against Monarchism? Arianism? Romanism? Socinianism? Universalism? The answer is everywhere the same. The Church again and again has challenged error and defeated it. The Church argued against Gnosticism, it argued against Arianism, it argued against Rome. The Church has never won one battle with a serious error by ignoring it. And the Church will not win its present battle against Modernism by ignoring it. Modernism ignored will corrupt Protestantism with its futile Socinian Christ just as Unitarianism ignored did corrupt New England Congregationalism. Congregationalism failed because it had no effective organization by which to carry on the contest. Most of the Protestant Churches, to-day, have an organization by which they can move against Modernism; but if they fail to use it, and Modernism is allowed to develop much further, the word Ichabod

will be written across the face of evangelical Christianity in America.

It may be some one will object: Does not conflict violate the spirit of Christ? We reply: The Master Himself said, "I came not to bring peace but a sword." Conflict never violates the spirit of Christ when wrong is enthroned. And wrong is enthroned if the fact of Christ is being denied or explained away in the pulpits, the schools and the publications of the Church. And if this fact of Christ is not a cause worth fighting for, life has revealed no worthy causes. If it does not matter whether God did in fact become man; if it does not matter whether He did die for our sins; if it does not matter whether He did truly rise from the dead and leave the grave ruined and empty behind Him; if these things do not matter, nothing matters; nothing is worth while; truth has become only an amiable emotion; heroism the memory of a past illusion; life a vanity.

Yes, the Church must aggressively oppose current error; but we add this further word: If the Church opposes error in love it will keep the big issues clearer, it will be able to oppose them more decisively, and it will bring the struggle to a successful issue more swiftly than if it allows its own sinful passions to becloud the splendor of its noble cause. We are glad, to-day, that Martin Luther fought his fight. We are sorry he sometimes fought

with passionate words; but no matter, we are glad he fought his fight and saved the Christian Church, including the Roman communion, from the blight that was threatening its very life.

Controversy and Evangelism

At this point a third question emerges: Will a period of controversy necessarily be a period without evangelistic success? The answer of history to this question, also, is decisive. The most fruitful periods in Church history have been periods of controversy. St. Paul was a Christian controversialist. Augustine was the same. Luther the same, so were Wesley, Asbury, Finney, yet all of these men led notable advances in the life of the Church, and their ministry had a remarkable spiritual fruitage. Controversy does not hurt the spiritual life of the Church, but compromise and insincerity do. It may be surprising, but it is nevertheless true, that the periods of controversy have been again and again the periods of the Church's most conspicuous spiritual advances. The Reformation was not only a controversy, it was also a mighty revival. And the Wesleyan revival was not only a revival, it was also a controversy. Finney's revival in New York state in the nineteenth century was a continuous controversy with Universalism; indeed, all revivals are an aggressive controversy with sin. Perhaps it is our very exaggerated love

of quiet that is a principal cause of our present ineffectiveness? Perhaps the vigor of controversy is the very thing we need. It may easily be that the Church will find a new interest in its precious faith from hearing it denied; and that the very shock of conflict may nerve it to a new devotion, and a new sacrifice. Personally we believe that all of this is probable. But whether controversy helps or hinders evangelism it is nevertheless unavoidable: for it is useless to evangelize youths in their early teens simply to have them unevangelized at unitarianizing colleges and universities in their late teens. It is useless to evangelize the lay hearts of the present generations, while we allow the leadership of the future generation to be trained into unbelief.

Evangelism and Education

Another important question that the Church is facing is: Have we outgrown the older evangelism? Has education replaced it? Of course the answer is, No. Every individual who is a member of Christ must have been evangelized; that is, he must have been led through the consciousness of his own sinful need into the act and attitude of a self-entrusting faith in Jesus Christ as his dying Savior, and his living Lord. In so far as education may be undertaking to develop a sense of the Christian ideal; a sense of the individual's shortness and sinful failure before this ideal; a sense of the all-suf-

ficiency of Jesus Christ as Redeemer, Savior and Lord; and may be seeking to lead the individual into an act of justifying faith in Him; and to guide him in the self-expression of the new life he has received in Him; in so far as education may be undertaking to do these things it is fully Christian. But if education is undertaking to replace Christianity's justifying faith in its all-sufficient Redeemer and Savior with a psychologically charted and mechanically built character, dedicated simply to love and serve men as Jesus did, it has denied the faith, and must be challenged and reconstructed by a Church that intends to be true to its trust from Christ.

The Church's Chief Instrument

This brings us to our last, and to a different question: What is the value of preaching, what of the sacraments, what of education, and what of art, music and ritual in the Church's task? We can get our answer very quickly if we simply turn back to the conception of the Church which we have sought to develop. The Church is an organization whose enduement, authority and responsibility is the total fact of Christ. Every means, then, of mediating this fact to men is a part of its equipment; and the relative value of any instrument will be measured by its effectiveness. The fact of Christ is fundamentally an emotionally enriched idea, and

man is essentially an intelligent personality; so that in mediating the fact of Christ to men, that particular means will be most useful which is able to convey most fully this total fact. When the question is thus approached the answer seems self-evident. Preaching is incomparably superior to every other means for conveying the fact of Christ to men. If you compare preaching with teaching, it will be apparent that in teaching the ideas are smaller, they have less range, they do not have as big a background of wonder and adoration. The teaching office contemplates the reëxpression by the pupil of the truth conveyed. The preaching office contemplates the bowing down in complete faith and trust of a moral personality before the sublimity of Christ. If you compare preaching and the sacraments it must be apparent that the sacraments are effective in conveying Christ only as against the background of teaching and preaching already done. The office of the Holy Ghost is to illuminate, to bring to remembrance, to guide, to enrich within the measureless depths of the full truth of Christ already given. His office contemplates teaching and preaching already done or being done. But, remembering that Jesus instituted the sacraments, that they are His own thought and provision, we would expect the Holy Ghost to fill the whole sacramental engagement with a rich and peculiar urgency. Preaching, however, must be valued above them both: for it has by far the richer

content, and they are valuable only as against its background.

As to art, music and ritual, they cannot be compared in importance with the value of preaching. We admit the worth of these other instruments. Some of the Protestant Churches have seriously impoverished their expression of the glory of Christ by neglecting them. The masterpieces of painting and music, the soaring, uplifting lines of Gothic architecture, the artistic symbols of Christ developed through the centuries have all a place in Christian worship. The important thing is to remember that the Church is undertaking to convey the whole truth of Christ to men, and that anything is of value only to the degree that it does this.

The Church's Responsibility

And now finally to mediate Christ is the Church's responsibility. We can best grasp this entire responsibility of the Church by analyzing it into four parts: The Church's responsibility to mediate Christ to the present adult generation; The Church's responsibility to mediate Christ to the younger generation; The Church's responsibility to mediate Christ by accomplishing an increasing conformity of the institutions of national life and of the practices of our civilization to the truth of Christ; the Church's responsibility to mediate Christ by guarding every expression both of its own organic life,

and of the individuals of its body, so that, both in inner motive, and outward fact they will be consistent with that love which is a consequence of our enduement in Christ.

We do not know what God may do for men in the moment of death, where the Church fails to mediate Christ to them before. Two things are apparent: one, that where the Church fails there is a lamentable failure in this world; the other, that we have no reason to suppose men will have a second chance in the world to come. It seems probable that the Holy Ghost will do much for men in the instant of death; in particular that He will do much for men of pagan lands in that freighted moment. But what He will do is not revealed; and the question of course is beyond our experience, save for the few suggestions that come to us from those who have stood near that mighty mystery and have turned back to live again. But this we know, that in this life, where the Church fails effectively to mediate Christ, there is deep and increasing failure. The increase of unbelief among adults that expresses itself either in cynicism or fear; the increase of unbelief among the young that expresses itself in mocking and suicide; the fact that numbers of the universities are producing atheism, that they are doing it consciously, if not intentionally; the serious lowering at points of the practical ideal of life; the open neglect of, and assault upon various noble institutions of the Christian faith

by which the race has risen out of paganism's tyranny and despair,—all these circumstances proclaim with an eloquence that is deep with pathos, that the Church to-day is failing effectively to mediate the precious fact of Christ to men.

If some one should ask: What will God do? The answer is: He will do nothing except as He finds a man, a group of men, a Church through which He can bring anew to our needy age the precious fact of Christ. Voltaire and the French Encyclopedists might have produced a Wesleyan revival in France. They chose otherwise, and produced the Reign of Terror. The French Church failed; and France failed with it. Germany blessed the world with the great Reformation in the sixteenth century, and cursed it with materialism and rationalism in the nineteenth. The difference is the difference between the German Church and its leadership in the two centuries. In the sixteenth century it was Luther, Melancthon, Frederick of Saxony and a multitude of other faithful men in Church and state, whose names are unknown to history, but known to God. In the nineteenth century it was Strauss, and Baur and Wellhausen and Bismarck and like men in Church and state, whose minds were cold to Christ, but inflamed with human self-sufficiency and greatness. When the Church fails life fails. God's utmost provision for the salvation of our sinful, broken human race IS THE TOTAL FACT OF CHRIST PROCLAIMED BY THE LIVING

VOICE OF THE CHURCH IN THE ENDUEMENT OF THE SPIRIT, and where this provision fails there is no other succor.

One wonders how much longer men will undertake to solve the problem of human sin just at points, here and there, instead of pressing the sublime divine provision for salvation in Christ upon the whole sin problem? Every new problem sin produces gives birth to some new society to oppose that sin and they all alike are largely futile: for they either fail totally in their undertaking, or, while they are seeking to solve the problem of sin at that one point, they but divert its expression, and it breaks out in two new problems somewhere else. It is time our age returned to the total fact of Christ with which the Church was entrusted. At least it is time the Church itself turned back to its own entrustment. This precious fact is secured to us in the Scriptures and in the Christian consensus by which across the centuries they have been faithfully interpreted. The Church must awake to this—its supreme responsibility. It must rediscover this—its supreme authority and enduement. It received the fact of Christ. It has the fact of Christ in the enduement of the Holy Ghost. This is its authority. This is its responsibility. If it has officers who have chosen to separate from this basis, and to deny this authority, it must with faithful patience seek to recover them, and failing, it must in Christian love remove them. To do so is not persecution; it

is simply fidelity to a supreme fact, and a supreme trust. No, it is not Church unity for which the world is waiting, it is Church integrity. It is not a new philosophy, it is a new fidelity. We do not need a new interpretation of Christ for this age, we need a new devotion to the Christ of the ages. When Christ instituted His Church and endued it in the power of the Holy Ghost with the fact of His incarnate Deity, His transcendent glory, His Cross, His Resurrection and His Gospel of redemption, the world was in the grip of pagan egoism. His impact upon the world as mediated by His Church has changed the whole face of civilization. The world has largely been made new. And the total fact of Christ in the enduement of the Holy Ghost has been the power of its renewing. This same fact and enduement is its one real need to-day. Away with modern man's intellectual pride. He can see no deeper into the ultimate mystery of being; and, of his own resource, can hold no more confidently the hope of a final destiny than could the remotest and most primitive of his forefathers. Final truth belongs neither to his little sciences, nor to his little philosophies. Man's intellect is not equipped to think through. Truth is a personal and not merely an intellectual proposition. There are in the soul mighty moral and spirital outreachings. They are not clear enough to lift us into certainty. We need the help of a great divine self-disclosure. We need

to have this disclosure certified to us. We have it. And it is certified to us. It is true by all our moral and spiritual outreachings. It fulfills them. This is the Church's total fact of Christ. It is supremely worthy of being humanity's choice, its moral venture in the truth. Once accepted, thus, it becomes an inner certainty, our norm and canon of reality. All our science, and all our philosophy we bring to the test of Him. He is our sure foundation. He is our highest loyalty. And to Him is our supreme entrustment.

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man— And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead, and He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, I am the First and Last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the ministers of the seven Churches, and the seven golden candlesticks are the seven Churches." [1]

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from

[1] Revelation 1: 12–20.

falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.[1]

[1] Jude, verses 24–25.

THE END

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